

**Ancient and Medieval Greek Etymology**

# **Trends in Classics – Supplementary Volumes**

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## **Volume 111**

# Ancient and Medieval Greek Etymology

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Theory and Practice I

Edited by  
Arnaud Zucker and Claire Le Feuvre

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## Preface

In this volume are collected papers presented at a conference held in Beaulieu-sur-mer, France, in March 2016. The conference was made possible thanks to generous funding by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation; it was supported by the Université Nice Côte d'Azur and the CNRS and hosted by the Villa Kerylos (National monuments centre). We thank those institutions for their support, and the editors of the Trends in Classics series for accepting the proceedings for publication, as well as the experts who provided the authors with valuable feedback. From this conference was born the association Etygram, which aims at federating scholars with an interest in Ancient Greek etymology and is working on an open-access online dictionary of Ancient etymologies, either transmitted by technical sources or found in Greek literature in general, provided with translation and analysis (ETYGRAM-D, Ancient and Medieval Greek Etymology): <http://appsweb-cepam.unice.fr/etygram>.

Arnaud Zucker and Claire Le Feuvre



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# Introduction

## 1 The difference between modern and ancient etymology

Modern *etymology* is Greek solely by name: the nature and rules of this scholarly discipline, which today arbitrate in the research on the origin of words, are completely alien to ancient theory and practice. It would moreover be wrong to believe that this branch of linguistics constitutes a modern form of an ancient science, so different are its principles and uses. Therefore, if the reader wishes to understand the focus of this book, he must consider the word ‘etymology’, used here to refer to ancient etymological exercises, in its genuine meaning. Two persistent mistakes render the original manner of dealing with words, known as the ‘*truth of words*’ in antiquity, difficult to understand: firstly, the belief that there exists a continuity of ideas and concepts, while language, poetic creation, interpretation, teaching, etc., are not continuous, nor even constant, ideas; secondly, the belief that, in pre-modern times, scientists did the same thing as modern scientists but in a primitive way. In etymology, as in botany, history or physics, Greek scholars did not pursue the same goals, nor did they apply the same methodologies as those used in modern sciences.

Etymology, in a modern sense, refers both to the official origin of a word and to the discipline that establishes it (Buchi 2019). The latter aims at retracing the history of lexical forms through a diachronic analysis and to offer a formal biography of words through the succession of their morphological appearances, at the cost of a series of phonetic transformations. It consists in a historical and etiological explanation that defines objective filiations of a formal type, but this archaeology is detached from current usage and constitutes a restrictive and abstract version of lexical development. Voluntarily external and as impervious to the experience of the speakers as possible, it takes into account accidents and unconscious dimensions of language (such as confusion, contamination, patronymic transfer, re-motivation, etc.) only when regular phonetic and morphological changes cannot account for a given wordform. In particular, it disqualifies both the appearance and affinities of signs even though their sound and semantic proximity make them obvious neighbors, considering them simply as *false friends*. What linguists call ‘false etymology’ or euphemistically dub ‘folk-etymology’ is acknowledged as a reality, but modern etymology resorts to it with caution. Cases of disconnection between the objective reconstitution of filiation or derivation of

forms on the one hand, and the subjective awareness of the speakers of the ‘kinship’ of words on the other, belong to the field of scientific etymology, but they are not its primary interest. Yet, it is precisely the second aspect, the *perceived* etymology, the morpho-semantic proximity of words in the language system that motivates the ancient etymologizing process.

The ancient conception of etymology, considered by many modern linguists as a language ‘disease’ (Béguelin 2002), is more a discourse than a science, and more precisely an inquiry (ἵστορία). It aims at revealing in a word all the other words hidden therein that helped bring it into being, treating words like palimpsests. For the idea shared by ancient authors, thinkers, commentators, poets and others is that each word hides other words which are matrices that once served to create it and that enclose and express part of its meaning. For instance, in εὐχή “prayer” the Greeks did hear εὖ “well”, and indeed prayers are formulated for the good of the one who prays, hence the etymology given by Orion (5th c. CE): εὐχή. ἡ τοῦ εὖ ἔχειν αἵτησις “the asking for well-being” (*Etymologicum*, epsilon, p. 53), the word being etymologized as a nominalization of the phrase εὖ ἔχειν.<sup>1</sup> Although this is not correct from a modern etymological perspective, the fact that εὐχή did contain εὖ was obvious for Greek speakers. This has the advantage of providing a motivation to the word εὐχή which is otherwise unmotivated in Greek: that is, it relates the word to one or several other Greek words which supposedly explain it, instead of leaving it isolated. And this is what Ancient Greek etymology is about: finding the motivation of words, be it obvious or hidden (and in the latter case the game is much more exciting). The etymological inquiry practiced intensely or incidentally by all ancient authors is a kind of linguistic anatomical investigation and aims both at revealing the compositional formula (“the words beneath the words,” to borrow a phrase from J. Starobinski)—in the example above, εὖ and ἔχω beneath εὐχή—and at revealing the intimate connivance between the form and the meaning (Orr 1954, 134).

## 2 Cultural reflection and language organization

In this process of lexical genesis or *onomatopoesis*, the meaning is more important than the form or phonic material. Both in Greek (as in the etymological variations of Socrates in Plato’s *Cratylus*) and in Latin (and Varro testifies to this by his typology of onomastic deformations in his *Latin Language*) etymologists

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<sup>1</sup> See the notice on the Etygram database: <http://appsweb-cepam.unice.fr/etygram>.

admit to multiple and deep torsions in their rebuilding and harmonization of words and their etymons. For Greek etymology must be instructive, operative and functional (Orr 1954, 130). It must permit demonstration of the correlation between words (between *all* words) of a language *and* their congruence with things. The synchronic relationship set between Greek words is expressed by prepositions, the variety of which show the flexible character of its relationship with the supposed etymon: ἐκ, ἀπό, παρά, διά. It is not a matter of filiation, but a kind of complicity, collusion or influence.

The essential quality of this ancient practice of analyzing, decoding and elucidating linguistic signs is that it renders clear and meaningful unconscious ways of thinking and verbal creations that are sometimes called associations of ideas, paronyms, word games, slips... It is therefore a reflection that is more a matter of semantic and cultural investigation than of regulated study of the evolution of phonemes and words. Ancient etymology can be defined, following the ancient rhetoricians and lexicographers, as the search for the (supposed) original *truth of words*.

Etymological or etymologizing practices reveal or motivate uses, rites, narratives, and “reflect the (semio-)logical strategies deployed by speakers to organize their lexical knowledge” (Béguelin 2002, 5). Etymology is “also an organizing instrument. Sometimes it operates on the form and sometimes on the meaning of words, grouping by form words that are associated by meaning, or grouping by their meaning words that are similar in form” (Orr 1954, 132). This is the reason why the theoretical and practical dimensions of this *serious game* are closely intertwined, and why both aspects are combined and considered in this book.

Of course, the relationship it establishes between the words is not always *genetically* correct even if always *culturally* relevant, since it is essentially based on intuition—reflective intuition. By favoring the basic principles of phonetics, i.e. sounds (phonemes) and their evolution, modern etymology validates relationships that are often oblivious to users: for instance, it tells us that the aorist θέσσαι “to pray for” and the verb ποθέω “to long for” are related, but no Greek speaker was ever aware of that. This genetic relationship cannot surface as a synchronic relationship in the consciousness of speakers. And ancient Greek etymology is about synchronic relationships.

In the Greek conception, all words imply more than they mean or echo. In a game of mirrors each word refers to others it contains, sometimes in a residual way, because each word has been conceived and formed from other pre-existing words that collectively express its meaning. We tend to view the relationship between words in a language too intellectually and in a narrow-minded way, whereas a language is anything but rigid and controlled. Modern lexicography,

dependent on the classical age's academic police, contributes to repressing the linguistic unconscious and to normalizing semantics. The radicalization of the etymological approach, in a kind of formal asceticism, considering semantic proximity illusory and useless for determining the etymology of a given word, is recent. In the 17th century, semantic proximity was still the main criterion in etymological research. Gilles Ménage was thus able to assert that the word 'laquais' (lackey) derived from the Latin *verna* "slave born in the house", despite all formal appearances, because of their similar meaning (Baldinger 1954, 233–236). Romanticism reversed the etymological perspective, which gradually based everything on phonetics and abandoned what L. Spitzer (Gamillscheg/Spitzer 1915) called 'spiritual etymology', that is, real and living etymology. This mutation is, however, more theoretical than real. As Müller's critical history of etymology in the 19th century shows, authors continue to juggle with the senses. Thus, Grimm (1819, II.30) derived 'Name' from 'nehmen', while *nomen* was at hand. The list of authors who more or less admittedly practiced amateuristic or fanciful etymology is vast, and continues to date, including authors as diverse as J.-P. Brisset, M. Heidegger, J. Lacan or L. Wolfson.

### 3 Lexicology and exegesis

For ancient intellectuals, all words, especially names, are portmanteau words (Gourinat 2008, 80–82). They are contracted forms, as indicated by the ancient definition in a commentary on the *Grammar* of Dionysius the Thracian (GG 1.3, p. 14 Hilgard):

ἐτυμολογία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνάπτυξις τῶν λέξεων, δι' ἧς τὸ ἀληθὲς σαφηνίζεται· ἔτυμον λέγεται τὸ ἀληθές.

Etymology is the unfolding of lexemes, by which truth is made clear; what is true is indeed said to be *etymos* (authentic).

This deployment of the constituents of the word proposed by the etymologist thus constitutes a kind of definition, a synchronic and simultaneous definition of words and things. The collection of all ancient etymologies proposed for the word ἄνθρωπος makes it possible to grasp this function. In ancient texts, the word receives the following definitions: man is the one who carefully 'reconsiders what he has seen' (ἀν(α)θρῶ(ν) ἄ) ὄπω(πε), Plato, *Cratylus* 399c); the one who 'rushes towards (and reflects on) what he has seen' (ἀν(α)θρῶ(σκειν καὶ ἀναλογίζεσθαι, ἄ) ὄπω(πεν), Et. Gudianum, alpha p. 147); he who 'does and looks' (παρὰ τὸ δρῶ

βλέπω, ἢ πρᾶττω, ἄδρωπος, Meletius, *De natura hominis* 7.8); ‘he who (squinting) his eyes considers what is above’ (παρὰ τὸ ἀν(ακλῶντα) τ(ήν) ὄψ(ιν) ἄν(ω ἀ)θρ(εῖν), Et. Gudianum, alpha p. 147); ‘he who aspires to that which is high’ (παρὰ τὸ ἄν(ω) ῥέπ(ειν), ἀνάρωπος τις ὢν, Meletius, *De natura hominis* 7.9); and ‘who has an articulate vocal sound or holds his countenance aloft’ (κατὰ τὸ (δι)αρθρ(οῦν τήν) ὄπα, ἢ ἄν(ω) ἔχειν) τ(οὺς) ὤπ(ας), Ammonius, in *Aristotelis De interpretatione* 38.16).

Etymology is considered an instrument of exegesis and a form of the interpretation of words, but in fact, it is equally a means of creating concepts. The links established between terms considered as secondary and their *etymons* are intellectual constructions that reorganize notions and constitute a lasting network. Etymology is a convenient way of glossing a word and appears at the very foundations of lexicology, the term *Etymologica* designating a major corpus of Byzantine dictionaries (*Etymologicum Genuinum*, *Etymologicum Gudianum*, *Etymologicum Magnum*...) that define the meaning of words through anatomical dissection. But etymological discourse is also, necessarily, hermeneutics. The *etymon*, that is ‘the true name’, is a concentrated form of discourse. Zeus (*Dia*) is ‘the one by which (*dia*) beings are alive (*zēn*)’. This equation is debatable, but if we place it in the name itself it ceases to be, or rather it becomes perfectly ‘sheltered’. The interpretation is lodged in the heart of the name, as if it were the germ of the name.

Even though this cultural construction including its intellectual gymnastics is very precocious and furnishes the most vivid results in the field of theonyms, it was nonetheless active throughout ancient literature. As evidenced by A. Filoni, Apollodorus of Athens (2nd c. BCE), an Alexandrian grammarian converted to theology and influential in neoplatonic philosophy, is a representative of this mainstream scholar activity. Before Cornutus (1st c. CE) and his *Compendium of Greek theology* based exclusively on the etymological unfolding of divine names, epiclesis and attributes, Apollodorus sought to reconstruct the logic and the true οὐσία of the Greek deities through the exegesis of the divine epiclesis. He proposed a method, both opportunistic and scientific, of interpreting divine onomastics in an etymological and symbolic way, relying on the tradition of the Homeric lexicons and using various registers (physical, geographical, moral, etc.) for his interpretations.

## 4 A rhetorical argument and heuristic practice

As Aristotle says, the justification of the ‘eponymous’ name of a god is part of the praise that is given to him (*Rhetoric* 1400b18–24), but it is more broadly a type of *enthymema* (*Rhetoric* 2.23) which is used in all forms of discourse and a *topos*: “This is how Conon called Thrasybule ‘man of strong will’ (*thrasyboulos*), how Herodicos said to Thrasymachus: ‘you are always a resolute fighter’ (*thrasy-machos*) and to Polos: ‘you are always a colt’ (*pōlos*), and in speaking of Dracon the Lawgiver: ‘his laws are not of a man but of a serpent-dragon’ (*drakōn*), because of their severity; that Euripides’ Hecuba said of Aphrodite: ‘it is with good reason that the name of madness (*aphrosynē*) is the beginning of the name of the goddess’; that Chaeremon said that Pentheus (‘mourning’) had a deserved name, that of his coming misfortune...”.

This form of motivation, which is a creative and dynamic process, is not limited to gods’ names. This is a general but serious intellectual game. Indeed, all poetic texts in particular use paronomasia and similar puns, in archaic or ancient poetry, from Homeric epos onwards (see Porphyry, *Quaest. Hom.* 122 Sodano: Ὅμηρικοῦ ὄντος τοῦ παρετυμολογεῖν), where it appears as a central concern of composition (see Louden 1995, and Nagy 2004, chap. 5–6). It is no wonder if Odysseus (Ὀδυσσεύς) is said, in the first verses of the epics, to lament (ὀδύρομαι, *Od.* 1.55, 5.151–153) and to face the hatred of the gods (ὀδύσσομαι, *Od.* 1.62, 19.407–409).

As shown by C. Cusset in his contribution to this volume, Alexandrian poets (including Callimachus, Apollonius of Rhodes, Lycophron and Aratos) passionately conducted onomastic research, in which etymological developments are not erudite digressions but have an etiological and narrative function. Proper names constitute micro-narratives that etymological interpretation seeks to re-semanticize within mythological narratives, while proposing through them a program of valorization and re-reading of the tradition.

Etymology opens up words like oysters, exposing their semantic flesh, because words somehow hide their meanings within their folds. And discovering the precise meaning by forcing things a little is a guarantee of truth, since truth is not immediately visible, and the wear and tear of time and philosophical discourse proceed in the same way: by slightly hiding the substance of things in words. What a word ‘hides’ is naturally what it is: ὄνομα κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ.

Search for linguistic motivation is some sort of intellectual drive, which is probably universal. As Stephanus of Alexandria (*In Int.*, CAG 18.3, p. 10) says, from an Aristotelian perspective:



πάντως οὖν τινες αἰτίαι εἰσὶν δι' ἃς οὕτως τοῖς ὀνόμασιν οἱ ὀνοματοθέται ἐχρήσαντο, εἰ καὶ ἡμεῖς τὰς πάντων ἐτυμολογίας οὐκ ἐπιστάμεθα.

There are, in any case, reasons that led the ‘baptizers’ to choose their names, even if the true meaning of each name is unknown.

This passage mentions the ‘name-givers’, mysterious and hypothetical men to whom Plato attributes the creation of nouns in the *Cratylus*, who appear to be known entities: they were the first to give names to things. Whether it is a supreme legislator who suddenly gave all the names, or different individuals who started circulating words, there must be a primary user and this inaugural user, this early *prōtos heuretēs* of the word, did not just say anything, he *chose* his words.

The entire Greek tradition is ensconced in this etymologizing passion and affected by a certain ‘Cratylean’ sensitivity, the pedagogical virtue of which is largely depicted by A. Vergados, in an unexpected text: Oppian’s didactic epic *On fishing* (*Halieutica*). The ichthyologic poet offers a number of etymological motivations, all faithful to the tradition of Hesiod, who knew and systematized not only a plethora of divine names but also the reasons that lay behind the establishment of each. In this domain etymological explanations seldom fulfill a single function (i.e. explaining the origins of the name of the fish in question); they are in fact more links within a network of issues pertaining both to ichthyic matters and to epistemic questions and pedagogical issues, embedding scientific information (from Aristotle, for example) in fish names that consequently appear as micro-narratives.

In Western tradition, Isidore of Seville, with his encyclopedic lexicon dually entitled *Origins* and *Etymologies* (ca 620) consecrates etymology as the universal principle of motivation (and definition) of words: “in Greek, the king is called *basileus* because he supports the people (*laos*) as a *basis*” (*Etym.* 9.3.18). The motivational function is obviously more important, because it guarantees that *nomi-na sunt consequentia rerum* (Dante, *Vita nova* 13.4). This entry into the *res* through the *nomen*, meaning the power (δύναμις, *vis*) to tell the truth, is a constant medieval practice, which can even be seen in the biographies of saints in Michel de Voragine’s *Golden Legend*, which always begin with a tour of the etymologies of their name.

## 5 An intellectual and literary driving force

The motivation (and re-motivation) of words is in fact the creation of etymons, an *etymopoiesis*, a sporadic or systematic process. This activity, which plays a dynamic role in cultural knowledge, is a symptom of great linguistic vitality. It is pedagogically a source for multiple developments: in mythology, grammar, geography, literature, philosophy, medicine, etc. As a matter of fact, mythology often consists in unfolding the program of the name which is a destiny in a nutshell. Telemachus, Oedipus, Lycaon etc. all prove this rule. The ‘etymo-logy’ or discourse on ‘the truth of the name’ is a line on the mythographic score and is presented as an undertone of the narrative language. It is not the name alone that has signification, but the name-in-a-plot. This is how the Titans ‘stretched out’ their hand to their father (Τιτῆνας τιταίνοντας, Hesiod, *Th.* 209) or how Helen fulfilled her destiny of destruction (ἐλεῖν) in accordance with their name, a linguistically fatal destiny that is underlined by the *Agamemnon*’s choir (681–682):

τίς ποτ' ὠνόμαξεν ὧδ' ἐς τὸ πᾶν ἐτητύμως

Who invented this name, name so fitting, so right?

Scholarly speculation can shift, without warning, from motivation well supported by tradition to pure fantasy, giving rise to ingenious prowess. This is the case with the *New Inquiry/History* from the grammarian Ptolemy Chennos analyzed by V. Decloquement, a work of mythographic narration and exegesis providing a kind of alphabet of heronyms. The author argues that Odysseus was called Οὔτις, not because he lied to Polyphemus (*Odyssey* 9.365 ff.), but because he would have been born with big ears (ὦτα). Decloquement reviews the various etymological compositional techniques used by Ptolemy Chennos (reversal of common sense, substitution of one name by another, assimilation of an object to a name, etc.) and proposes a typology of these etymological manipulations which feed a work of factitious exegesis of Homeric poems, revealing new mythological options and alternative narratives.

The name is not limited to itself; or to put it another way, the name is nothing more than *the result of a discourse*, whereas one often stubbornly assumes that it is a constitutive element that makes it possible. *Genesis* is often the movement that leads from the narrative to the name. The etymological argument, as an ‘enthymeme’, is indeed in discourse “the most decisive means of persuasion (or proof)” (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1355a6, 1356b25, 1394a10), and it can be used in all sciences, as N. Rousseau shows for medicine through the example of Galen.

## 6 A serious game

There is undoubtedly always a certain amount of play and taste for puns present in the etymology practiced by the Greeks, but it is a serious game, as are all mind and language games. *The Palatine Anthology* (especially book 14) is full of serious and pedagogical puns, as shown by the selection studied by S. Beta, who argues that these linguistic acrobatics presented in the form of enigmas can rarely be reduced and interpreted in a univocal way. They are not mere virtuoso playful exercises, but models, used throughout the Byzantine period, to teach not only language but also ancient literature and culture. Actually, it is absolutely impossible to understand ancient intellectual practices if one makes the mistake of considering play and seriousness as contradictory. Nothing could be further from the truth. And this persistent double mind game is not only Greek. The term ‘to play on words’, although often brought to mind in such cases, is usually incorrect when naming the intellectual exercise, both philosophical and literary, and imaginative and thoughtful, in which the Ancients indulged. The Platonic *Cratylus* dialogue is an illustration of this: as D. Sedley reminds us, not a single ancient commentator considers Socrates’ ‘Cratylean’ exposition to be a parody and all recognize the value and legitimacy of this path of questioning—even if the path is unsure.

Romani draws our attention to the philosophical potential of etymological research in his case study of the τέχνη in the *Cratylus*, both as an etymologized word and as a clue to considering the method (i.e. *techne*) of name-giving. Introduced as ‘one of the things that appear to be serious’, τέχνη is compositionally analyzed as originating from the roots of ἔχειν and νοῦς; hence the meaning ‘possession of intelligence’ or ‘holding on to intelligence’ (*Crat.* 414b6–c8). Despite their exaggerated belief in flux and transience, the early name-givers implicitly acknowledged the importance of methodological stability in order for their own procedures to enjoy the status of *techne*. They also suggest that etymology is an activity that needs to be subordinate to the oversight of philosophy.

The two main options concerning the origin of words are carried by the protagonists and antagonists of the Platonic dialogue: Cratylus, the proponent of a natural and reasoned origin of words, on the one hand, and Hermogenes, the holder of a conventional, even arbitrary, origin, on the other. M. Chriti demonstrates that the neoplatonists Ammonius, Simplicius or Philopon, in a movement of ‘harmonization’ and philosophical ecumenism, aim at reconciling the position partly defended by Socrates of a ‘ruler of names’ and that of Aristotle, who states that words are created and established by an agreement between men: eventually names are considered as existing both ‘by nature’ (φύσει) and ‘by convention’ (θέσει). The author also shows the role that, according to these philosophers, ety-

mological reflection can play in the constitution of controlled neologisms, providing a methodological tool for the creation of words.

This game, despite the great freedom in connecting words, and the absence of a methodological approach (as in modern scientific protocols of linguistic investigation) nevertheless has its rules. As has been said, it is based on the postulate of consistency in a language, conceived as a synchronic system in which words communicate and are mutually shaped. The idea itself assumes reasoned and motivated naming by (early) men—a ‘correctness’ of names quite opposite to the arbitrary nature of the sign of modern doctrine. Words must meet two requirements in order to be potential kin and etymologically related: they must manifest semantic proximity (i.e. compatibility and a form of convergence of meanings) *and* graphic or phonetic proximity (i.e. similar material composition). In practice, etymologists took more liberties with the latter, mainly due to two phenomena, promoted as ‘corruption principles’ by Latin grammarians: wear and tear due to time, and poetic make-up introduced for aesthetic reasons. These two factors can play in any direction, with no regular evolutionary process, and poets can be blamed for all kinds of cosmetic arrangements. Moving letters within a word (metathesis), addition or subtraction are also common accidents which, in the eyes of etymologists, do not need any particular justification and allow all kinds of tinkering necessary to make one word appear as the root of another.

## 7 The simultaneous and cooperating plurality of etymons

Another essential feature of ancient practice is the admitted existence of the plurality of etymons for each word. This is not a flexibility betraying the reluctance of authors to define the origin of a word, but a set principle stating that every word in a language always potentially (and often explicitly) has several etymons. Modern linguists are totally deaf to such a conception and this undoubtedly constitutes the major difference between ancient and modern etymology. The Greek genetic model of the construction (i.e. derivation) of words is that of artificial synthesis, not natural procreation: each word is a graphic-semantic compromise, the result of modeling during which the creator of names sought to incorporate the maximum number of semantic facets of the word, which investigators can, like Socrates in *Cratylus*, seek to detect. The large number of etymons constitutes confirmation of the accuracy of this research and not a weakness thereof: the more explanations there are, the more reasons the ancients had for naming this or that

as they did; in other words, the more etymological explanations authors can provide, the more motivated the sign is both on morphological and semantical levels.

Our difficulty in envisaging this idea reveals the extent of the gap separating the two notions and uses (modern and ancient) of the word ‘etymology’. It is based on both theoretical foundations and ideological blockages. Modern linguistics, born in Prussia at the end of the 18th century (with figures such as Humboldt), considered etymological investigation as a kind of genealogical reconstruction, developed in a patriarchal society and culture: a man has only one father (and only one mother); similarly—or therefore—words have a sole origin. The monogenesis of names is a dogma which, admittedly, does not precisely correspond to the two-parent generation model, but the ‘family’ terminology of 19th century linguists regarding etymological relationships shows the importance of this model: “Jedem Worte kommt nur eine Etymologie zu, so wie jedes lebende Wesen nur eine Mutter hat” (Müller, *Ninth lesson on the science of language*, 1869, 2.380) and “each word can have only one etymology, just as each living being can have only one mother” (*ibid.* 2.139).

Conversely, the peaceful multiplicity of etymological options, the first application of which is known to have been divine onomastics, can be considered typical of a culture in which polytheism was not a theological principle but the religious aspect of a more general mode of thought, both competitive and plural. Greek pluralism (so cruel in Plato’s heart) is thus translated in etymological practice by the idea that the candidates for the ‘truth of the name’ are in cooperation rather than competition. In matters of name, as in matters of religious etiology or myth, i.e. in matters of archaeology, origins are obscure and interpretations can add up without weakening each other. The plural or ‘ecumenical’ formula of ancient etymology is nevertheless consistent with the analysis rendered by certain modern linguists of the dynamics of semantic motivation. As Dalbera (2006, 24) writes, “sign motivation does not only occur once and for all in the creation of a lexical unity; at any moment the need for reason can manifest itself, not only in new signs but also in lieu of demotivated signs that have become arbitrary.” The motive that presided over the creation of a sign can in fact “be considered in several different ways, without there necessarily being a hierarchy among them (the best interpretation) or, above all, exclusivity (the true interpretation). There would be lexical room for competing interpretations” (*Ibid.* 137).

## 8 Linguistic consciousness and unconsciousness

The unbiased study of this linguistic process encourages researchers to renounce to the Manichean dualism of ‘true’ and ‘false’ etymologies (Kabakova 1992), taking into account that ‘the etymologies of the etymologists’ are sometimes no better than those of the people. Actually, we are more and more often invited not to treat them as “a kind of comic interlude on the stage of linguistics”, since “popular etymology has conditioned [...] at all times, the life of language, being only a manifestation, albeit sometimes outrageous, of the associative processes that, alone, makes the acquisition of a language, its handling and its development possible” (Orr 1954, 141). So-called popular etymologies are not only folk and meta-linguistic witnesses, but actors in semantic and linguistic evolution in general. In the case of so-called common expressions (which also largely caught the attention of ancient authors under the name *παροιμία*) linguists or essayists face both the impossibility of opting in favor of one single explanation and the fruitfulness of an approach that admits to the effective complicity and cooperation of several co-existing genealogical options.

Beyond the explicit recourse to etymological exegesis, it appears that this sensitivity to the affinity of words with each other—which is the object of the present volume—is constantly expressed through onomastic associations, sometimes with subtle and sometimes with implicit words, and in all scientific or literary texts. Implicitness may be suggested by the context (epigrammatic form, enigmas, symposia...) or a network of assonances or alliterations.

It is not essential to prove that Gregory of Nyssa (*In Canticum canticorum*, Or. 15, 6.242 Langerbeck), for example, consciously wanted to reinforce his exegesis of a poem from the *Song of Songs* when he provided successively over four lines, as an echo to *δορκάδος* (gazelle), *δόκιμον* (renown), *κρίνων* (judgment), *δεδορκώς* (vision) *διακρίνων* (discernment) and *καρδία* (heart), a relay of his symbolic interpretation. It is sufficient to agree that in these echoes a significant and effective phonetic-semantic association is visible. This opaque or uncertain form of etymology, whether it is the true intention of the author or the suspicion of the reader, expresses the diffusion, painted within the text, of this formal attention to the links between words.

## 9 The rules of ancient etymologizing

It is important, however, to stress that everything in Greek etymology is not wild fantasy and that the discipline obeys rules and principles which, although they may not be correct from a modern linguistic point of view, have nevertheless some roots in the Greek language.

The most bewildering characteristic of Greek etymologies is that they can be multiple. We find often in the works of philosophers or grammarians that word X “may come from Y, or from Z.” In modern etymological reconstruction, such a formulation means that the etymology of X is not certain and that two etymologies have been proposed, but that only one of them is the correct one. That is, if X comes from Y, it does not come from Z, and conversely. But for Greek philosophers and scholars, Y and Z were not exclusive of each other and both etymologies could be correct (see above for the philosophical justification of that conception).

## 10 Context and etymology

One important reason for those multiple etymologies is that, whereas modern etymology aims at accounting for a word as an abstract entity, ancient Greek etymology is fundamentally contextual and aims at accounting for a word in all the contexts in which it can be used. That is, it incorporates by necessity semantic features which are not the word’s but are provided by the context, so that the ‘perimeter’ of a given word varies according to the context in which it is used. This variation is what multiple etymologies try to capture. As a god can have several epicleses, local, functional, mythological, each used in a different context (remember that etymology in Greek started with theonyms), so a word can have several etymologies, each accounting for a different contextual use. This is particularly obvious when it comes to the explanation of Homeric words, when the etymology of a word is drawn from one specific context, as illustrated by C. Le Feuvre in her article. Even though the syntagmatic association between the word and the alleged etymon in the context is obviously contingent, Greek scholars nevertheless use this association as a proof of a semantic and formal relationship between both. Then, such an etymology, born in one precise philological context, is considered valid in itself independent of context. Greek scholars, as well as philosophers, very often back a proposed etymology by quoting Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Aeschylus or other literary giants, not only because of the authority of

those poets, but because this provides the context justifying the etymology. Thus, for a given word there are as many potential etymologies as there are different contexts of use.

This is sometimes explicit: “word X comes from Y when it means A, comes from Z when it means B,” A and B being two different contextual uses. As an example, here is what the *Scholia in Batrachomyomachiam* 81 say about δέμας:

δέμας σημαίνει δύο· τὸ ζῶν καὶ τὸ τεθνηκός. καὶ τὸ μὲν ζῶν ἐτυμολογεῖται ἀπὸ τοῦ δέω τὸ δεσμῶ, τὸ συνδεδεμένον ὃν τῇ ψυχῇ. τὸ δὲ τεθνηκός ἀπὸ τοῦ δαμάζω, τὸ δεδαμασμένον οἶον “δέμας

‘Bodily frame’ has two meanings: it designates the living body and the dead one. When it is the living body, its etymology is δέω ‘to bind’, because it is that which is bound with the soul. But when it is the dead body, its etymology is δαμάζω ‘to tame’, as it has been tamed.<sup>2</sup>

Here X is δέμας, Y is δέω, Z is δαμάζω, both Y and Z having at least two phonemes in common with X. The semantic features ‘dead’ or ‘alive’ do not belong to X; they are inferred from the context: but in a given context, X is either ‘dead’ or ‘alive’, which are of course very different things, hence two etymologies referring to two distinct states of X in different contexts. Most of the time, however, this remains implicit, either because it was so from the start, or because those etymologies have been transmitted by sources which have omitted part of the necessary informations. C. Le Feuvre, through two case studies on etymology in the Homeric scholia, argues for the necessity of first restoring the missing information in order to understand how Greek etymologists worked and to be able to evaluate their explanations in the system to which they belong.

Needless to say, contextual etymology leads to strange results from our modern point of view, but this point was central to Greek thinking about words. Does that mean that taking context into account is irrelevant? No, and modern etymology uses context, too, looking especially for phraseological collocations. Therefore in principle the Greeks were not wrong to pay attention to context; the problem is that they selected in the available contexts elements which were not relevant, for lack of valid criteria.

<sup>2</sup> The translation is taken from the website Etygram, <http://appsweb-cepam.unice.fr/etygram>, where the notice can be found in full.



## 11 Phonetic manipulations

Another striking feature of ancient Greek etymology is its recourse to numerous phonetic manipulations, such as adding a consonant, deleting a vowel, modifying the order of phonemes, changing a consonant into another one and so on. That was reputedly characteristic of the Stoics, but in fact this is systematic: all Greek authors dealing with etymology indulge in this type of manipulation, including Plato in the *Cratylus*. Provided there is a semantic affinity and a formal (vague) similarity, phonetic manipulations can derive anything from anything. Those manipulations seem to be completely random and arbitrary. They are in most philosophers because the latter do not take the pain to explain how that works. But Greek grammarians, in particular the Alexandrian school, sought to justify those changes through analogy, that is, by giving other examples of the same phenomenon through which they demonstrated (in their opinion) that the change was regular. This is not always explicit in what has survived of their works, but this enterprise was systematic (Lallot 2012, 228). And most of the time, the involved manipulations have their roots in real linguistic phenomena found in Greek: when an etymology relies on the transformation of a voiced plosive into a voiceless one (θ/τ), it can appeal to the many examples of aspirate dissimilation like τρέφω/ἔθρεψα, θρίξ/τριχός. When an etymology relies on the change of a short vowel into a long one or conversely, it can appeal to the many cases like τίθημι/τίθεμεν, φημί/φᾶμέν in which the long and short vowels alternate. When an etymology relies on the change of an [e] into [o], it can appeal to the many cases of apophonic alternation of the type λέγω/λόγος. When an etymology relies on the addition of a consonant, it can appeal to the countless forms derived through suffixation, which as a matter of fact adds a consonant, as in τέκος/τέκνον, in μῆκος/μακρός (combined with the quantity alternation of the preceding case), or at the beginning of a word in μικρός/σμικρός. When an etymology relies on metathesis, it also goes back to the observation of real cases of metathesis in Greek. That is, all that stems from a linguistic observation which in itself is correct, and shows a rather good understanding of the morphological relationships uniting words belonging to a same root (to put it in modern terms), on the whole (see Sluiter 2015, 914–915). But, because the Greeks had no notion of historical phonetics, this correct observation was wrongly extrapolated to cases for which it was not justified.

## 12 Defiance of etymology in antiquity

The absence of rules guiding extrapolation is the cause of this seeming arbitrariness of the manipulations required between the etymon and the actual word. This was already considered with great suspicion by many learned Greek in antiquity. N. Rousseau in her article shows how Galen in the 2nd c. CE rejected that kind of practice and considered etymology as practiced by his contemporaries useless and unable to tell anything worthwhile about the meaning of words. However, Galen himself uses etymology in a restricted sense, namely for derivation. When he acknowledges that φλέγμα has its etymology in φλέγω, he underlines the derivational relationship between the two words, which is of course correct, and although he considers that this is a correct etymology, he nevertheless argues from this example that etymology is useless for understanding the meaning of words, since in medical terminology φλέγμα refers to the cold and humid humor, whereas its etymology should have connected it to the hot and dry one—and in ordinary language it does mean ‘burning’. Galen thereby affirms that the etymological search, even in the narrow sense restricted to derivation, cannot do anything against usage and that what matters is usage. We have here a rare example of an explicit critical evaluation of contemporary scholarship.

This example taken by Galen could be used to illustrate the principle of enantiosemy, developed by D. Petit in his article. Enantiosemy refers to the practice of etymologizing a noun through a word which has an opposite meaning—another bewildering conception for us. It was in favour above all in Rome, and several works of Stoicist inspiration show examples of it. The most famous instance is *lucus a non lucendo* “the ‘wood’ is named from the fact that there is no light.” D. Petit examines the origin, development and continuation of this principle down to the 19th c. We could add “φλέγμα ‘cold humor’ from the fact that it does not burn,” although enantiosemy is never explicitly invoked in the case of the medical use of φλέγμα. Enantiosemy relies on the fact that the word and its alleged etymon share one semantic feature at least, and that polarity undergoes an inversion in the process of derivation—from positive, it becomes negative. There are few instances in Greek authors before the imperial era. Enantiosemy probably has its roots in antiphrasis and euphemism, familiar rhetorical tropes extended to etymological derivation: in that case again, a well-known phenomenon is extrapolated from a domain in which it is justified, rhetorics, to a domain in which it is not, etymology. This principle should not be taken as proof of a lack of rigor, but as the result of an erroneous application of a correct linguistic observation.

To sum up, although not much in ancient Greek etymology is correct from our modern point of view, its principles are far from fanciful. They rest on a correct observation of linguistic facts. And, correct or not, those fantastic etymologies give us precious insights on the way the Greeks used to think about language in general and their own language in particular.

## 13 Conclusion

In ancient times practicing etymology was therefore freely exercised and consisted in searching for a family resemblance between words. This family resemblance could be deceptive, as was the resemblance between Adenoid Hynkel and the Jewish barber in Charlie Chaplin's *Dictator*, but is nonetheless significant, otherwise we would not see it. We are sensitive to family resemblances between words and, as speakers or readers, we build on these similarities in many ways. Etymology as a living practice links contemporary words together, like communication vessels. It thus assumes that flight and light, world and word, well and well are no strangers to each other. When phonetic proximity and semantic compatibility exist, words are irresistibly attracted to each other in the mind. Thus, objective etymology mimics or elucidates pairings that the mind finds more or less vague: it does not arbitrarily invent correspondences but expresses the existence of privileged relationships, of variable distances between words in the mind. Language is thought by people and slips and improvised pairings are eruptions of these neighboring words in the brain. They signal not only psychical ambivalences but also relationships between the deep meaning that words hold in a language.

Today, etymological intuition is often regarded as a form of magical thinking, an interpretative delusion that ignores the rules that modern science has forged to give these relationships between words the status of true history. Today a clandestine (or 'parallel') inclination, valid only to betray oneself, etymologizing is, in fact, a largely unconscious, tonic activity of *living* the language. The studies gathered here on ancient situations and etymologizations can provide an opportunity both to reconsider the formal constraints of the discipline that claims official control over etymological practices and to become more aware of the reality and fruitfulness, in the life of the mind and the creation, of this often discreet but profound and multiple etymologizing practice.

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## Part I: **Etymological Practices and Philosophical Issues**



Marco Romani Mistretta

# Naming the Art, or the Art of Naming: The Etymology of τέχνη (*technē*) in Plato's *Cratylus*

## 1 Introduction

Is there, for Plato, an art of naming?<sup>1</sup> And what about etymology, the practice of analyzing names into their originary, fundamental components? Is etymology itself an art? These and related questions will be at the core of my discussion, which focuses on the *Cratylus* from the perspective of Plato's conception of art and craftsmanship. First of all, I shall examine the etymology of the word for 'craft' itself (τέχνη) provided by Socrates. Through a study of its implications for the theory of language outlined in the dialogue, I intend to show that, besides being deeply intertwined with etymological inquiry, the namegivers' activity is regarded by Plato as dependent upon philosophical dialectic.

## 2 The etymology of τέχνη

In the *Cratylus*, the etymological analysis of τέχνη is part of a series of etymologies concerning morally or intellectually connotated names (such as φρόνησις, γνώμη, δικαιοσύνη, ἀνδρεία, etc.).<sup>2</sup> The noun τέχνη itself is introduced by Socrates as one of the 'many things left to examine, among those that appear to be serious' (σπουδαῖα). Socrates then etymologizes it compositionally, based on phonetic affinity, as originating from the roots of ἔχειν and νοῦς: hence the meaning 'possession of intelligence', or 'holding onto intelligence'.

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1 The title of my paper is deliberately reminiscent of that used by Silverman (1992), who stresses the importance of the notion of nature (φύσις) in the *Cratylus*: I focus instead on the idea of art (τέχνη). My best thanks are due to Arnaud Zucker and the audience of the Etygram 2016 conference.

2 The etymologies of νόησις, τέχνη, μηχανή, δόξα are lumped together under the label of 'moral notions' (vaguely related to the domain of ψυχή), which Hermogenes exhorts Socrates to analyze: cf. *Crat.* 408d–410e.

ΣΩ. [...] ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ ἐπισκοπεῖς με ὥσπερ ἐκτὸς δρόμου φερόμενον ἐπειδὴν λείου ἐπιλάβωμαι· ἐπίλοιπα δὲ ἡμῖν ἔτι συχνὰ τῶν δοκούντων σπουδαίων εἶναι.

ΕΡΜ. Ἀληθῆ λέγεις.

ΣΩ. Ἴδν γ' ἔστιν ἓν καὶ “τέχνην” ἰδεῖν ὅτι ποτὲ βούλεται εἶναι.

ΕΡΜ. Πάνυ μὲν οὔν.

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν τοῦτό γε ἔξιν νοῦ σημαίνει, τὸ μὲν ταῦ ἀφελόντι, ἐμβαλόντι δὲ οὗ μεταξὺ τοῦ χεῖ καὶ τοῦ νῦ καὶ <τοῦ νῦ καί> τοῦ ἦτα;

ΕΡΜ. Καὶ μάλα γε γλίσχρως, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩΜ Ὁ μακάριε, οὐκ οἶσθ' ὅτι τὰ πρῶτα ὀνόματα τεθέντα κατακέχωσται ἤδη ὑπὸ τῶν βουλομένων τραγωδεῖν αὐτὰ περιτιθέντων γράμματα καὶ ἐξαιρούντων εὐστομίας ἔνεκα καὶ πανταχῇ στρεφόντων, καὶ ὑπὸ καλλωπισμοῦ καὶ ὑπὸ χρόνου. ἐπεὶ ἐν τῷ “κατόπτρῳ” οὐ δοκεῖ [σοι] ἄτοπον εἶναι τὸ ἐμβεβληθῆαι τὸ ῥῶ; ἀλλὰ τοιαῦτα οἶμαι ποιοῦσιν οἱ τῆς μὲν ἀληθείας οὐδὲν φροντίζοντες, τὸ δὲ στόμα πλάττοντες, ὥστ' ἐπεμβάλλοντες πολλὰ ἐπὶ τὰ πρῶτα ὀνόματα τελευτώντες ποιοῦσιν μηδ' ἂν ἓνα ἀνθρώπων συνεῖναι ὅτι ποτὲ βούλεται τὸ ὄνομα· ὥσπερ καὶ τὴν Σφίγγα ἀντὶ “φικὸς” “σφίγγα” καλοῦσιν, καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ (*Crat.* 414b2–d5).<sup>3</sup>

SOCR. [...] But don't you perceive how I am, so to speak, driven off the race-course as soon as I reach smooth ground? Yet many things, of the sort that seem serious, still remain to be examined.

HERM. It is true.

SOCR. One of these is to see what “craft” (τέχνη) might mean.

HERM. Yes, indeed.

SOCR. Now, doesn't this signify “holding on to intelligence” (ἔξις νοῦ), once you take out the *tau* and insert an *ou* between the *chei* and the *nu* and between the *nu* and the *eta*?

HERM. Yes, Socrates, but with great difficulty.

SOCR. My dear friend, don't you know that, by now, the first given names have been altogether buried by those who wanted to theatricalize them by adding and removing letters for the sake of euphony and by turning them around in all sorts of ways, and also by embellishment and time? As for the “mirror” (κάτοπτρον), doesn't it seem strange to insert a *rho*? But such things, I believe, are the work of those who care nothing for the truth, but shape the mouth in such a way that, inserting many new elements into the first names, they end up preventing any human being from understanding what the name means in the first place: so, for instance, they call the Sphinx “σφίγξ” rather than “φίγξ”, and so on and so forth.

When Hermogenes expresses his rather understandable scepticism concerning Socrates' etymological explanation (καὶ μάλα γλίσχρως),<sup>4</sup> Socrates goes on to ex-

<sup>3</sup> Texts from Burnet's OCT edition; translations mine.

<sup>4</sup> The adverb used by Hermogenes (γλίσχρως) literally means ‘stickily’ or ‘viscously’. The word is used again by Socrates himself, when he mentions the ‘sticky trail that resemblance has to travel’ (*Crat.* 435c4–5; cf. Sedley 2003, 141), explicitly referring to the τέχνη analogy and arguing



plain that the original phonetic shape of the word has been obscured by subsequent embellishments,<sup>5</sup> operated over time<sup>6</sup> by people who did not care so much for the ‘truth’ expressed by language as they did for language’s potential to be ‘theatricalized’ for the sake of aesthetic pleasure.<sup>7</sup> The wise man, on the other hand, must always have τὸ μέτριον and τὸ εἰκός in view when establishing the shape of names:<sup>8</sup> a preoccupation with truth is what distinguishes good craftsmen of language from bad ones.

Indeed, one might intuitively understand etymology (a term never used by Plato) as a heuristic search for truth through language, whereby language itself is abstracted from its ordinary use in everyday communication and considered in its pure, originary form. Conceived in this way, etymology seems to presuppose a kind of primeval truth inherently embedded within the fabric of language, which the expert etymologist has to unravel. Throughout the *Cratylus*, the main issue at stake is not so much whether names are natural or conventional, but precisely whether human language has, in and of itself, any direct access to the knowledge of truth. The *Cratylus* can thus be read as an investigation of the relationship between linguistic inquiry, construed as a form of specialized knowledge, and philosophy. In this regard, it is striking that very few interpreters to date have tried to relate the etymological passage on τέχνη to the fundamental issue of specialized knowledge in the dialogue and in Plato’s epistemology more generally.<sup>9</sup>

The importance of the craft analogy in the *Cratylus* is readily acknowledged when one considers its ‘framing’ role within the dramatic structure of the dialogue. The motif appears time and again in both the opening and the closing

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that the names’ resemblance to their referent has very little relevance when it comes to the correctness of names themselves (see further Ademollo 2011, 416–417).

5 Socrates seems to admit of variations at the level of the signifier which do not affect the intrinsic relationship at the level of the signified, between the name and the named thing. In other words, the ‘rules of the game’ internal to the ‘linguistic game’ of etymology allow for arbitrary adjustments in the phonetic shape of a word (cf. *Crat.* 393d–394c).

6 Throughout the dialogue, etymological procedures strongly presuppose diachrony, even though many etymologies seem to be treated synchronically (see further Baxter 1992, 58; Rosenmeyer 1998, 52).

7 The *Cratylus* offers the only occurrences of the verb τραγῳδέω in Plato (here and at 418d4).

8 *Crat.* 414e2–3.

9 Cf., however, Aronadio 2011, 85–87; Gatti 2006, 369; Riley 2005, 93. Genette (1976, 14) rightly identifies one of the main conceptual pivots of the *Cratylus* as the issue of craftsmanship and artisanal production, “l’un des terrains favoris de la dialectique socratique-platonicienne”: names are relational tools of communication, and fashioning a name means building a tool.

scene of the piece,<sup>10</sup> thus lying outside the two main ‘elenctic’ sections in which Socrates refutes Hermogenes’ conventionalism and Cratylus’ naturalism respectively. Throughout the dialogue, craftsmanship itself is the operative model that functions as an epistemic foil for the activity of naming and its efficacy. During the initial discussion on the ‘correctness of names’, for example, Socrates asserts that names are tools and, as such, they ought to be produced by specialized craftsmen.

Now, however, a craftsman building a tool out of raw material cannot simply act on the whim of the moment, but has to abide by a certain set of procedural rules established in accordance with the purpose or function that the object is to perform. The raw material itself and the function of the finished product are, in this sense, predisposed by nature: an auger is made of iron and serves the purpose of boring holes, whereas a shuttle is made of wood and serves the purpose of weaving.<sup>11</sup> What purpose do names serve? According to Socrates, they are tools meant for ‘teaching’ and for the ‘decodification of being’ (διακριτικὸν τῆς οὐσίας);<sup>12</sup> the ‘raw material’ they are made of is a set of syllables and sounds, and the craftsman producing them is called ‘lawgiver’,<sup>13</sup> or νομοθέτης (a mythical figure of possibly Pythagorean origin, at least according to Proclus).<sup>14</sup>

In order to build a name correctly, i.e. in accordance with the action that the name is to perform, the νομοθέτης has to look at ‘the thing itself which is name’: in other words, not at the objective referent that is named by the name, but rather at the idea (τὴν ... ἰδέαν) which the name is to be modeled upon, in the same way as an auger is modeled upon the idea of auger and a shuttle is modeled upon the idea of shuttle.<sup>15</sup> If naming is indeed a τέχνη, called τέχνη ὀνομαστική,<sup>16</sup> then one might suppose that etymologizing is also a legitimate craft, essentially consisting in “reverse-engineering”<sup>17</sup> the lawgivers’ finished products in order to go back to their constituent elements (στοιχεῖα).<sup>18</sup> In the remainder of my paper, I am going

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Crat.* 387a–390e, 423d–425a, 428e–429b.

<sup>11</sup> *Crat.* 389c2–390a2.

<sup>12</sup> *Crat.* 388b13–c1.

<sup>13</sup> *Crat.* 428e4–429a1.

<sup>14</sup> Procl., *In Crat.* 16 = DK 68 B 26 (on which see further Goldschmidt 1982, 65; Pagliaro 1956, 57; Van den Berg 2008, 103–106).

<sup>15</sup> See further Ewegen 2014, 81.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *Crat.* 425a4.

<sup>17</sup> Sluiter 2015, 904.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Crat.* 421a–d.

to argue that this is not the case: at least not for the type of etymological procedures displayed by Socrates in the long etymological section of the *Cratylus*.<sup>19</sup>

### 3 Τέχνη between flux and stability

Many attempts at a full understanding of these nearly thirty OCT pages have been hindered by the time-honored dichotomy between ‘taking Socrates seriously’ and dismissing the etymologies as a mere sarcastic *divertissement* or a satiric display of Socratic irony. After all, irony itself is never devoid of philosophical significance in Plato’s works: once irony has been detected, the issue of its exact function and meaning in its specific context is still entirely open. Even though it might be difficult to keep a straight face in front of certain etymological puns (like σελήνη from σέλας and ἥλιος, or ἀγαθόν as ἀγαστόν and θοόν),<sup>20</sup> recent scholarship on the *Cratylus* has the rather welcome tendency to move beyond the *Scherz oder Ernst* question and to read the etymological section as a healthy mix of humor and seriousness:<sup>21</sup> a sort of σπουδαιογέλοιον, to use Aristophanes’ lingo.

Throughout the etymological section, Socrates shrewdly adopts the *persona* of the Cratylean naturalist, purporting to believe in an ‘inherent truth’ hidden in the structure of names. This allows him to strike a fatal blow at the conventionalist thesis defended by Hermogenes, whereby the correctness of names is entirely arbitrary and conditional upon the individual speaker’s intention. Frequently compared by Socrates himself to a Homeric chariot race,<sup>22</sup> the ‘swarm’ of etymologies with its whimsically unsystematic character mirrors the Heraclitean ‘flux’ that constitutes its philosophical underpinning.<sup>23</sup> In fact, as Socrates explains,

<sup>19</sup> As Sluiter (2015, 910) observes, whenever Plato rejects a certain discourse as a valid method for reaching philosophical truth, Socrates is “shown to have absolute mastery of it”. For a different view, cf. Sedley 2003, 41–50.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. also *Crat.* 426b5–6, where Socrates calls his own etymologies ὕβριστικά καὶ γελοῖα; at *Crat.* 400b4–7, the etymology of ψυχή is labeled as both τεκνικώτερον and γελοῖον. The disingenuous tone of the etymological section is also given away by Socrates’ frequent resort to ‘artifice’, μηχανή (cf. *Crat.* 409d3, 416a4, 425d6), which is etymologized right after τέχνη (*Crat.* 415a).

<sup>21</sup> See especially Ademollo 2011, 238–240; Aronadio 2011, 146; Barney 2001, 50–51; Goldschmidt 1982, 145 fn. 1; Sedley 2003, 33; Silverman 1992. For a different view, cf. e.g. Keller 2000 and Lallot 1991, 141.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. e.g. *Crat.* 414b3.

<sup>23</sup> See e.g. Barney 2001, 56; Gulley 1962, 75; Kahn 1973, 153; Sedley 2003, 112. According to Baxter (1992, 107), the polemical target of the etymological section is no specific current of thought

the early namegivers' incessant effort of ζήτησις made them constantly turn around all sorts of things, until they came to think that not just knowledge *per se*, but reality as a whole, is an unstoppable stream in everlasting flow and motion.

So far, so good. Oddly enough, however, the τέχνη etymology appears in the context of Socrates' examination of names that the early namegivers regarded as positive inasmuch as they denote flux, whereas names hinting at stability are interpreted as negatively connotated.<sup>24</sup> Without further clarification, a positive and constructive value is attached to τέχνη, even though it refers to stability (ἔξις) rather than motion. Such a puzzling inconsistency is, of course, far from being the only one within the etymological discussion: in fact, Socrates eventually leads Hermogenes to admit that in many cases the namegivers had a static referent in mind even when they assumed a certain name to indicate movement.<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, considering the conceptual relevance of τέχνη for the whole dialogue and the crucial position of the τέχνη discussion within the etymological section,<sup>26</sup> the peculiar etymology offered by Socrates cannot be left unexplained. What does it mean, for the art of names, to entail 'possession of intelligence'? It may be that, despite their exaggerated belief in flux and transience, the early namegivers at least had a vague inkling of the need for methodological stability in order for their own procedures to enjoy the status of τέχνη, as Sedley suggests.<sup>27</sup> This, however, still leaves open the question concerning the epistemic nature of the namegivers' craft, and consequently of the etymologist's activity as well. Can language-construction, and therefore also etymology, reveal the true nature of things?

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in particular, but rather "a culture-wide mistaken belief in the power of names" (which obviously presupposes a fairly educated audience).

<sup>24</sup> See e.g. *Crat.* 411d4–8, 416a10–b5, 421b4.

<sup>25</sup> *Crat.* 437c3–8. Thus, etymologizing on Heraclitean premises leads to intestine conflicts among names: whereas the theory of flux suggests that knowledge-terms relating to movement are positive and 'static' terms denote error or ignorance, Socrates will show that the very opposite holds true (see further Dixsaut 2000, 173).

<sup>26</sup> The centrality of the τέχνη etymology is emphasized by the surrounding discussions: it is preceded by a reference to τὰ σπουδαῖα and followed by the treatment of such ethically loaded words as ἀρετή and κακία. Aronadio (2011, 99) rightly observes that the etymologies of such terms as ὄνομα, ἀλήθεια, ψεῦδος and ὄν are very significant from a Platonic perspective: τέχνη itself should be added to the list. Precisely because of its bizarre phonetic artificiality, the etymology of τέχνη needs to be justified on a deeper, conceptual basis. In the case of other etymologies (e.g. Ἑρμῆς/ἑρμηνεύς at *Crat.* 407e5–408a5), the phonetic proximity of the words makes it possible to read the etymological account as primarily based on a subtle *jeu de mots*.

<sup>27</sup> Sedley 2003, 159 fn. 21.

## 4 Τέχνη and correctness

Some light can be shed on the ‘technical’ status of namegiving and etymologizing by Socrates’ re-definition of the ‘philosophical correctness’ of the etymologies. Flux, according to him, is not a property of external reality, as the namegivers seem to believe: rather, their faith in flux is the result of their own inner state of mind, characterized by impulsivity and inconsistency.<sup>28</sup> It is this mental attitude, this Heraclitean vertigo, and not the natural ‘ebbing and flowing’ of reality, that prevents the lawgivers from reaching a fixed, stable position upon which to ground their linguistic research and knowledge of the world.

ΣΩ. "Ἐτι τοίνυν τόδε σκεψώμεθα, ὅπως μὴ ἡμᾶς τὰ πολλὰ ταῦτα ὀνόματα ἐς ταῦτὸν τείνοντα ἐξαπατᾷ, εἰ τῷ ὄντι μὲν οἱ θέμενοι αὐτὰ διανοηθέντες γε ἔθεντο ὡς ἰόντων ἀπάντων ἀεὶ καὶ ῥεόντων — φαίνονται γὰρ ἔμοιγε καὶ αὐτῷ οὕτω διανοηθῆναι — τὸ δ', εἰ ἔτυχεν, οὐχ οὕτως ἔχει, ἀλλ' οὔτοι αὐτοὶ τε ὥσπερ εἰς τινα δίνην ἐμπεσόντες κυκλώνται καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐφελκόμενοι προσεμβάλλουσιν. σκέψαι γάρ, ὦ θαυμάσιε Κρατύλε, ὃ ἔγωγε πολλάκις ὀνειρώπτω (*Crat.* 439b10–c7).

SOCR. Let us now consider this, so that we may not be deceived by all these names pointing in the same direction: whether the name-givers really posited them thinking that everything is in perpetual motion and flux — for it seems to me that they did think so — or, by any chance, this is not the case, but they themselves, as though fallen into some whirlpool, are stirred into confusion and, dragging us together with them, might throw us too into the vortex. Examine now, wonderful Cratylus, what I often dream of.

As Socrates points out here, at the very end of the etymological section, any present-day etymologist runs the risk of falling into the same whirlpool of confusion which held the ancient namegivers’ minds captive. In the final scene of the dialogue, Socrates reaches the conclusion that the namegivers’ misguided Heracliteanism must be rectified through philosophical investigation in order for names to fulfill the communicational function they are built for: in other words, to secure the only type of ὁρθότης that they can possibly attain.

Once the naturalist thesis that names are ‘mimetic’ reproductions of things has been refuted,<sup>29</sup> Socrates addresses the question of the ‘instructive’ capacity of names to teach us about the reality of things. If names were actual ‘teachers’ of reality, then there would be one and the same τέχνη for both, since there is but

<sup>28</sup> *Crat.* 411b4–c5.

<sup>29</sup> The comparison between namegiving and painting at *Crat.* 424d is not meant to attribute “mimetic limitations” to the τέχνη of naming (Ewgen, 2014, 88), but precisely to undermine Cratylus’ theory of the mimetic resemblance between names and named objects.

one τέχνη of things perfectly similar to each other. Moreover, assuming that the reality of things can only be learned through names leads to a hermeneutic circle, since one would have to imagine that the first νομοθέται, too, could learn or ‘find’ (εὐρεῖν) the truth from other linguistic sources even before establishing the first names (τὰ πρῶτα ὀνόματα).<sup>30</sup>

True knowledge of reality, which is marked by intrinsic stability (βεβαιότης), cannot be achieved through names, but only through the things themselves.<sup>31</sup> In contrast with the mistaken Heracliteanism of the early namegivers, knowledge is not acquired by ‘going with the flow’. Knowledge is such only insofar as it possesses the steadiness of being, as opposed to the constant flux of coming-into-being.<sup>32</sup> In fact, stability itself is what makes it possible to attribute names to things, or indeed to practice any τέχνη. This is doubtless part of the reason why, in the *Gorgias* and elsewhere, Plato uses the expression νοῦν ἔχειν (or the like) when programmatically defining τέχνη against the backdrop of practices that cannot be classified as such.<sup>33</sup>

ΣΩ. Οὐκοῦν ἀποδείξεις τοὺς ῥήτορας νοῦν ἔχοντας καὶ τέχνην τὴν ῥητορικὴν ἀλλὰ μὴ κολακείαν, ἐμὲ ἐξελέγξας; εἰ δέ με ἑάσεις ἀνέλεγκτον, οἱ ῥήτορες οἱ ποιοῦντες ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν ἃ δοκεῖ αὐτοῖς καὶ οἱ τύραννοι οὐδὲν ἀγαθὸν τοῦτο κεκτήσονται, ἡ δὲ δύναμις ἐστίν, ὡς σὺ φήεις, ἀγαθόν, τὸ δὲ ποιεῖν ἄνευ νοῦ ἃ δοκεῖ καὶ σὺ ὁμολογεῖς κακὸν εἶναι (*Gorg.* 466e13–467a5).

SOCR. Will you then prove that the orators possess intelligence, and that rhetoric is a craft, not a form of adulation, and thus refute me? Otherwise, if you will leave me unrefuted, the orators who do what they deem fit in their cities, and the tyrants, will acquire no good in doing this, given that power is indeed, as you claim, a good, but doing what one deems fit without intelligence is, as you yourself admit, an evil.

In the above passage, the chiasmic structure τοὺς ῥήτορας νοῦν ἔχοντας καὶ τέχνην τὴν ῥητορικὴν is very significant. The proximity of the two coordinated expressions seems to suggest that νοῦν ἔχοντας is, in fact, an etymological gloss on

<sup>30</sup> *Crat.* 438b1.

<sup>31</sup> In antiquity, Galen (*On Anatomical Procedures* 2.580–581 Kühn) attributed this view to both Plato and himself: see further Nathalie Rousseau in this collection of essays.

<sup>32</sup> Similarly, stability (βεβαιότης) is altogether denied to names in *Epist.* 7.343b1.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. also *Resp.* 6.506c6–9, 7.534b3–6, and *Theaet.* 167d7. For Plato’s use of the expression in the idiomatic sense of ‘paying attention’ or ‘being in one’s right mind’, cf. e.g. *Phaedr.* 274a1, *Protag.* 324a7, *Resp.* 3.416c5, *Leg.* 5.747e6.

τέχνην,<sup>34</sup> which is explained as deriving from νοῦν ἔχειν in the *Cratylus*.<sup>35</sup> Socrates, of course, will go on to show that rhetoric is by no means a legitimate τέχνη: thus, the pairing of ὀνομαστική and rhetoric in Socrates' mouth towards the end of the *Cratylus* casts a somewhat dubious light on the art of naming itself.<sup>36</sup>

## 5 Names and forms

For Plato, any τέχνη is required to aim at a specific good and to be able to provide a rational account (λόγος) of the object and procedures used by the craftsman.<sup>37</sup> Expertise, skill, and power are worthless and even dangerous without the application of νοῦς to the ultimate goal of each craft. Namegiving faces further challenges. In fact, due to their dependence on a world of flux, names have an inherent tendency to mislead and misrepresent reality.<sup>38</sup> The god Pan, an embodiment of λόγος, has a twofold nature whose lower part is 'goatlike' (τραγικός) and prone to falsehood, much like language itself.<sup>39</sup>

In the etymological section, on the other hand, the phrase ὄνομα ἔννοεῖν is frequently used for 'understanding a name' etymologically:<sup>40</sup> thus, acquiring νοῦς seems to be the ultimate purpose of etymologizing. Furthermore, a name is

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<sup>34</sup> In fact, this is not the only case of Platonic re-working of the *Cratylus*' etymologies in other dialogues. At *Phaedo* 80d–e, for instance, the mention of Hades is juxtaposed with the adjective αἰδής 'invisible', which is one of the etymological explanations proposed for the name of Hades in the *Cratylus* itself (*Crat.* 403a–404b). I am indebted to Dr. Francesca Scrofani for this point.

<sup>35</sup> For a similar expression (πρόσεξις τοῦ νοῦ) used in conjunction with τέχνη, cf. e.g. *Resp.* 3.407b2. The phrase also recurs quite frequently in the Hippocratic treatises (cf. e.g. *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, 2: ἐμοὶ δ' ἀνδάνει μὲν ἐν πάσῃ τῇ τέχνῃ προσέχειν τὸν νόον), denoting the adequate practical application of procedures established within a τέχνη (see further Knutzen 1964, 1.1333).

<sup>36</sup> *Crat.* 425a1–b3. See further Aronadio 2011, 183.

<sup>37</sup> *Gorg.* 500e4–501a3, *Phaedr.* 270e3; cf. also *Theaet.* 202c1–5, *Hipp. Mai.* 285c–d, *Hipp. Min.* 368d.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Barney 2001, 73.

<sup>39</sup> *Crat.* 408c6–9. The etymology is clearly ironical yet perfectly consistent with Plato's well-known assessment of tragic poetry (as expressed in book 10 of the *Republic* and elsewhere). This is just one example of the fact that ironical and serious threads are constantly intertwined throughout the etymological section of the dialogue (cf. also the long discussion of justice at *Crat.* 412c–413d).

<sup>40</sup> See e.g. *Crat.* 398c, 398e, 399a, 401d, 411c, 418b.

often said to νοεῖν something,<sup>41</sup> i.e. ‘to signify’ something.<sup>42</sup> In the face of the unceasing flow of coming-into-being, the art of correct namegiving and name-interpreting calls for a steady application of νοῦς, whose content is necessarily to be supplied by knowledge of the forms.

This seems to be confirmed by Plato’s use of the expression νοῦν ἔχειν in passages concerning the hierarchical classification of mental faculties, as is the case in book 6 of the *Republic*, shortly after the sun analogy and right before the Divided Line is introduced.

Οὕτω τοῖνυν καὶ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ὧδε νόει· ὅταν μὲν οὐ καταλάμπει ἀλήθειά τε καὶ τὸ ὄν, εἰς τοῦτο ἀπερείσθεται, ἐνόησέν τε καὶ ἔγνω αὐτὸ καὶ νοῦν ἔχειν φαίνεται· ὅταν δὲ εἰς τὸ τῷ σκότῳ κεκραμένον, τὸ γιγνόμενον τε καὶ ἀπολλύμενον, δοξάζει τε καὶ ἀμβλυώττει ἄνω καὶ κάτω τὰς δόξας μεταβάλλον, καὶ ἔοικεν αὐτὸ νοῦν οὐκ ἔχοντι (*Resp.* 6.508d4–9).

This way, conceive now of what concerns the soul: whenever it is fixed upon what is illuminated by truth and reality, it apprehends and knows it, and appears to possess intelligence. But when it focuses upon what is mixed with darkness, what comes to be and passes away, it forms opinions, its sight is weakened, and it changes opinion back and forth, appearing not to possess intelligence.

The lower faculties of the soul, which focus on a perceptible world dominated by coming-into-being and passing-away, are limited to the domain of δόξα. By contrast, the soul only proves to νοῦν ἔχειν when it transcends the perceptible world and fixes its attention (note the stability verb: ἀπερείσεται) upon the domain of knowledge where the radiant light of truth and reality shines like that of the sun. As the sun lights up visible objects, so does the idea of the good illuminate intelligible forms.<sup>43</sup> Even though this classification need not exactly be mapped onto the *Cratylus*’ theory of knowledge, it certainly provides a powerful clue as to what it might mean for the craftsman to apply, and hold on to, νοῦς.

The apprehension of the forms, on the other hand, is not a prerogative of the craftsman himself (in this case, the namegiver). Indeed, it does not fall into the category of any productive τέχνη. It is helpful here to apply the distinction between producer’s craft and user’s craft, established by Plato in the tenth book of the *Republic*.<sup>44</sup> In order to build a lyre, a lyre-maker must receive instructions from a lyre-player, who knows what function the lyre is to perform and how the

<sup>41</sup> See *Crat.* 397e, 407e, 416a, 416b, 418b.

<sup>42</sup> See further Rijlaarsdam 1978, 146.

<sup>43</sup> See also *Resp.* 6.506c6–9.

<sup>44</sup> *Resp.* 10.601d1–2. On the hierarchy of τέχναι, see further Balansard 2001, 73–74; Cambiano 1991<sup>2</sup>, 181. On Plato’s conception of τέχνη in general, see also Brisson 2013 and Roochnik 1996.



instrument is to perform it. Generally speaking, the user's τέχνη is conceptually and hierarchically superior to the corresponding producer's craft.

## 6 Leaky pots

The main *raison d'être* of names has already been understood to be a functional and instrumental one: thus, their production requires a specific kind of expertise, that of the νομοθέτης. The namegiver's activity will, however, need to be subordinated to that of the user of names, the dialectician. Therefore, insofar as it is to be a τέχνη in the etymological sense proposed by Socrates, the namegivers' activity not only has to abide by methodological standards of soundness and stability, but is also prevented from claiming epistemic and axiological autonomy, since it must be subjected to the oversight of philosophy.

The need for philosophical direction in the art of language is thus confirmed by the requirements and limitations that Plato associates with expert knowledge. The etymological discussion clarifies that the semantic validity of language itself is not a given but needs to be ascertained and grounded, through a normative analysis, on a dialectical basis.<sup>45</sup> Far from being self-regulating, the study of language must be anchored to a superior τέχνη, i.e. to dialectical inquiry.

In this sense, Socrates' etymology of τέχνη as ἔξις νοῦ is prescriptive rather than descriptive. The name, or rather its origin, is meant to influence reality and stimulate a course of action: not the reverse.<sup>46</sup> This is not to say that Plato is advocating for the construction of a wholly new, 'philosophical' language *à la* Leibniz (even though he does not only practice etymology across his dialogues, but frequently coins new Greek terms, such as ὀνοματουργός, which is not attested before the *Cratylus*).<sup>47</sup> Rather, his concern is to show that the noetic apprehension of ontological realities is a fundamental prerequisite for a correct (i.e., dialectical)

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<sup>45</sup> See Cambiano 1991<sup>2</sup>, 183.

<sup>46</sup> See Daniel Petit's definition of "performative" and "causal" etymology in this same collection of essays.

<sup>47</sup> For Plato's linguistic coinages, see further Aronadio 2011, 204. As for the Leibnizian idea of a *grammatica universalis*, Kahn (1973, 167) rightly asserts that Plato is not interested in the utopian project of founding an 'ideal language', whose elements must be as natural as possible: in fact, he constructs that model in order to prove that the (etymological) study of words does not lead to a better understanding of things as they are. For Plato's readiness to etymologize in dialogues other than the *Cratylus*, see e.g. *Phaedr.* 244b6–d5 and *Leg.* 957c (see further Barney 2001, 71).

use of names, and that ontological truth cannot be attained through the etymological research of his (or Socrates') contemporaries.<sup>48</sup>

Etymology itself, in fact, does not satisfy the requirements for being a τέχνη: it cannot provide a rational account of its procedures, nor can it claim to νοῦν ἔχειν with respect to its ultimate goal.<sup>49</sup> Part of Socrates' 'serious irony' therefore consists in offering an etymological analysis of the word τέχνη which itself refutes the etymologists' ambition to possess a τέχνη! No wonder that, in his final argument against the thesis that knowledge can be acquired through names, Socrates uses an image of 'flawed' craftsmanship to describe the namegivers' conception of flux: to assume that the entire world is governed by change and movement is like assimilating all things to 'leaky pots'.

οὐδὲ πάνυ νοῦν ἔχοντος ἀνθρώπου ἐπιτρέψαντα ὀνόμασιν αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν αὐτοῦ ψυχὴν θεραπεύειν, πεπιστευκότα ἐκείνοις καὶ τοῖς θεμένοις αὐτά, δισχυρίζεσθαι ὥς τι εἰδότα, καὶ αὐτοῦ τε καὶ τῶν ὄντων καταγιγνώσκειν ὥς οὐδὲν ὑγιὲς οὐδενός, ἀλλὰ πάντα ὥσπερ κεράμια ῥεῖ [...]. (*Crat.* 440c3–8).

[SOCR.] Nor is it worthy of a person of sense, having entrusted the care of oneself and one's soul to names, full of confidence in them and those who posited them, to rest assured of knowing something and to condemn oneself and reality for the fact that nothing at all is sound, but everything flows like ceramic vases [...]

Socrates' simile employs defective products of artisanal technique as a vehicle in order vividly to represent the namegivers' equally faulty conception of nature (the tenor). Craft is, indeed, a re-creation of nature, but not in the sense in which the dizzy Heraclitean namegivers understood it.

In fact, the namegiving craftsman does not merely 'mimic' nature, but rather intervenes upon the pre-existing nature of things and is guided by it at once.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> On pre-Platonic etymological practices, see further Peraki-Kyriakidou 2002; Sedley 2003, 70.

<sup>49</sup> This did not stop some ancient commentators of the *Cratylus*, such as Proclus, from being convinced that etymology is in fact a τέχνη (see Van den Berg 2008, 128–129).

<sup>50</sup> Cf. *Crat.* 389a5–c6. In order for there to be a τέχνη ὀνομαστική, names must be more than a mere acoustic imitation of things: otherwise, naming would inevitably fall under the category of μουσική or γραφική τέχνη. According to the 'mimetic' account, it is through articulated sounds and syllables that a name reproduces the essence of a thing. Correspondingly, the ὀνομαστικός is defined as a person capable of 'revealing' (δηλοῦν) that essence (*Crat.* 424a6). The τέχνη ὀνομαστική is then characterized as a compositional craft operating with 'atomic' elements which imitate specific features of extra-linguistic reality (*Crat.* 424d–e; for the possible Democritean echo, see e.g. Derbolav 1953, 24). A fragmentary, 'atomistic' ontology of flux is thus subreptitiously introduced, one that is obviously at odds with the stable and 'static' theory of being sketched by Socrates (in fact, the conception of ὀνομαστική as a 'compositional' and 'atomic'

Albeit used in the familiar sense of ‘being reasonable’, the expression νοῦν ἔχειν in this passage inevitably recalls Socrates’ etymology of τέχνη: quite ironically, it is used to deny epistemic validity to the theoretical assumptions underlying the etymological study carried out in the dialogue. As a result, any attempt to acquire knowledge through the etymological study of language is not worthy of ‘someone who has νοῦς’, as Socrates puts it here.

## 7 A brief conclusion

For Plato, names are ‘conventional’ insofar as they are products of craftsmanship, but ‘natural’ insofar as they are crafted in accordance with the normative model provided by the forms, i.e. under the guidance of dialectic. In the domain of language, both φύσις and νόμος are ultimately subject to the action of craftsmanship. This way, the *Cratylus* succeeds in overcoming the aporetic dilemma between the naturalist and the conventionalist position, both of which are centered upon the structure and constitution, rather than the function, of names themselves.<sup>51</sup> More than the end, however, this is the beginning of the story.

A number of other issues, in fact, are raised but not solved in the dialogue. Here, for example, Plato does not address the problem of what νοῦς exactly is and how it is to operate. In the *Republic*, for instance, νοῦς is described as the part of soul inherently related to the intelligible (νοητόν);<sup>52</sup> being superior to διάνοια, νοῦς appears to entail an intuitive access to the world of forms.<sup>53</sup> For Plato, however, noetic intuition is not a sudden insight alien to discursive research, but rather the coronation of a long process of investigating and understanding the deep relational structure of being.<sup>54</sup> In the *Cratylus*, at any rate, the question of how

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craft directly contradicts the ‘static’ definition of τέχνη itself given in the etymological section). Soon afterwards, the identification of a precise correspondence between the linguistic στοιχεία and elements of reality turns out to be ultimately impossible (see *Crat.* 432a–c). In the *Theaetetus* (201e–202c), Socrates makes the similar point that truth cannot lie in the single elements of language, but only in their combination (see further Burkert 1970, 453). For the relationship between the *Cratylus* and the *Theaetetus*, see notably Barney 2001, 172–176 and Annas 1982.

<sup>51</sup> For this point, see notably Aronadio 2002a, 140 and Kraus 1987, 201. For a different view, see Schofield 1982, 79.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. especially *Resp.* 6.511d6–e4. See further Dixsaut 2000, 66; Ferrari 2005; Kahn 1986.

<sup>53</sup> The fact that knowledge implies ‘being able to give an account of knowledge’ does not exclude the possibility of intuitive and non-discursive insight (see Silverman 2001, 42).

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Silverman 2001, 26; Aronadio 2002b, 50–51.

dialectic itself can achieve a noetic, non-procedural insight into ontological reality without resorting to the tools of language<sup>55</sup> is left unanswered.

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Maria Chriti

# Etymological Proximities and *Onomastics*: From Aristotle to Ammonius of Hermeias

## 1 Introduction: from the origins to the *Cratylus*

The subject of this paper is Aristotle's etymological/semantic policies in name-assigning, as considered by his Neoplatonic commentator Ammonius of Hermeias, the head of Alexandria's school, whose positions and methods were formed according to a particular exegetical tradition.

The present discussion does not concern approaches to a certain etymological decoding, but the relation between etymology and onomastics, i.e., the use of given etymologies in attribution of names, as practiced by Aristotle and acknowledged by Ammonius, an interpretation intrinsically related to the debate over the *natural* or *conventional* character of language. Ancient etymology in general was connected with the issue of the nature of language through a process of philosophical osmosis, cast in terms of the relation between words and their *signifieds*; this is why both Aristotle's formulations and Ammonius' comments on them should be contextualized historically and philosophically.

Ancient Greek etymologies in general depict aspects of philosophical reflection on language. However, authors of antiquity did not aim at reconstructing the origins of a word,<sup>1</sup> as contemporary etymological research is bound to do, but they were interested in the relation between a word and its meaning,<sup>2</sup> a meaning that ancient etymologists were not interested in identifying, since they concentrated on detecting its *relation* with a specific vocal sound. This is why linguistically "incorrect" etymologies were accepted, even more than one, for one and the same word, as long as they could give to ancient thinkers "sound" reasons for a word's relation to its signified. Ineke Sluiter could not have put it more aptly:<sup>3</sup> ancient etymology is about *semantics*, in the sense that what is investigated is the meanings' connections to respective words.

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<sup>1</sup> See the characteristic examples given by Sluiter 2015, 902 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See Sedley 1998, 140–142; Sluiter 2015, 896–890.

<sup>3</sup> Sluiter 2015, 900.

Primitive etymological insights are traceable in the Pre-Socratic fragments,<sup>4</sup> while texts of drama also frame such considerations,<sup>5</sup> the most famous being that of the Chorus in the *Agamemnon* to explain the etymology of Helen's name.<sup>6</sup> An intense interest in language is expressed by the Sophists, who are concerned with the "nature vs. convention" debate. The Sophists argue that language is fundamentally conventional, and consequently we can change or correct it.<sup>7</sup>

The two main opposite views are revealed in Plato's *Cratylus*, the first linguistic text where several etymologies are set forward. The subject of the work is the "correctness of names (= words)":<sup>8</sup> in conversation with Socrates, Hermogenes claims that names are imposed by human beings in a completely conventional way, while Cratylus objects that names depict the substance of the things. According to Heraclitean<sup>9</sup> Cratylus, names were given by a superior power,<sup>10</sup> defined as a "god/daemon" by Socrates.<sup>11</sup> Cratylus claims that all names were once

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4 See, e.g., fr. 23 DK: Heraclitus, supporting the "coexistence of opposites", refers to the consideration of the 'unjust' as a condition for approaching the concept of 'just'. On the development of philosophical thought on the nature of language from the Pre-Socratics to Plato, see Blank 2000, 400–404; Sluiter 2000; Law 2003, 13–51; Frede/Inwood 2005, with the respective bibliography. See also Kotzia/Chriti 2014, I–II.3.

5 Thus, Strepsiades in Aristophanes' *Clouds* names his son *Pheidonides* (Φειδωνίδης) in reference to his father's stinginess (φειδομαι = 'spare persons and things'): *Clouds* 65 ff.; see Thompson 2007, 678.

6 Aesch., *Agamemnon* 681–698; see Sluiter 2015, 908–909. Later, a category of names denotes concepts and ideals such as 'virtue', 'glory', 'power', 'bravery' etc (see Thompson 2007, 680). Paronyms described social/family status or a corporeal/mental feature; see, e.g., Strabo 13.2.1.7–11: *Theophrastus* was named after his divine gift of eloquence, while his real name was the 'ill-sound' *Tyrtamus*.

7 See Kotzia/Chriti 2014, I.2. The Protagorean *homo mensura* ("Of all things the measure is man": fr. 80B1 DK) is also activated in language. Protagoras corrects Homer by saying that in the *Iliad*'s first verse Homer should have used a wish instead of a command (Arist., *Poetics* 1456b14 ff. = 80A1 DK). Aristotle also refers to Protagoras' conviction that the female nouns μῆνις ('wrath') and πῆληξ ('helmet') should have been of male gender because of the "gender" of the respective concepts (*Sophistical Refutations* 173b17–22).

8 ὄνομα can be 'said in two ways' (διχῶς λεγόμενον) in ancient linguistic thinking, as stressed by Aristotle (*On Interpretation* 16b19–20): a) it is every 'meaningful utterance' and consequently ῥήματα are also ὀνόματα; b) in a *categorical statement*, a *name* designates the agent of a *verb*, the *subject*. For a more recent survey on the development of the term ὄνομα see Wouters/Swiggers 2014.

9 On the tendency to connect Heraclitus' approach to constant change with Cratylus' view ("Heraclitean" Cratylus), see Aristotle's *Metaphysics* A 6, 987a32; M 4, 1078b12; Γ 5, 1010a7; see the discussion of Dalimier 1998, 24; Irwin 1977, 1–13; Baxter 1992, 26; Mouraviev 1994, 508.

10 *Cratylus* 438c.

11 *Cratylus* 429a.



correct but were distorted during their use and only via etymologies can we arrive at their *etymon*. Etymologies play a particular role in this dialogue and have recently been assessed as considerations on a range of basic philosophical concepts which attracted the interest of ancient reflection.<sup>12</sup>

Socrates attempts to compromise the two extremities by arguing that a name functions as a didactic tool and as an *imitation* which is *natural* in the sense of fitting the nature of what is named.<sup>13</sup> However, Socrates' deconstruction of names, although conveying valuable information on the things' attributes, reveals their inadequacy to provide access to things.<sup>14</sup>

## 2 Aristotle on name-giving

There is no definite conclusion at the end of the *Cratylus*, but Aristotle is considered<sup>15</sup> to give one at the beginning of *On Interpretation*: words are conventional, and his terms *symbols* (σύμβολα) and *by-convention* (κατὰ συνθήκην) stand in contrast to the Socratic *tool*.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, Aristotle's approach is not identical to Hermogenes' conventionalism,<sup>17</sup> as he does not maintain that any person can assign any name he wishes but that a word's use is established "when it becomes a symbol",<sup>18</sup> which means that its practice is *agreed* upon by the speakers of a linguistic community. Aristotle's particular interest in the factor of agreement when it comes to linguistic use is not undervalued by the absence of

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<sup>12</sup> Dalimier 1998, 38–47. See also Sedley 1998, 149 ff.

<sup>13</sup> *Cratylus* 388b13–c1; 423b9–11.

<sup>14</sup> See Dalimier 1998, 50–51; see also Sedley 1998, 144–146, as well as Sluiter 2015, 910–913.

<sup>15</sup> For a comparative survey of the two works in contemporary literature, see Dalimier 1998, Introduction; Struck 2004, 83; Van den Berg 2008.

<sup>16</sup> *On Interpretation* 16a26–28, 17b13–17. For a detailed discussion of Aristotle's "semantic passage" see the classical surveys of Kretzmann 1974, 3 and Irwin 1982; see also Weidemann 1991, 170–173 and 176ff.; Manetti 1996; Sedley 1998; Verbeke 1996; Ax 2000, 59–63; Arens 2000, 367–370; Modrak 2001, 1. On Aristotle's semantics in particular, see Kotzia/Chriti 2014; Chriti 2018. In *Sophistical Refutations* too (165a6 ff.) Aristotle declares that words are *symbols* of things which cannot be brought in front of us when we talk about them.

<sup>17</sup> *Cratylus* 386a ff.

<sup>18</sup> Arist., *On Interpretation* 17a1–2. See also the discussion in Chriti 2019b.

criticism against Cratylus' etymologies,<sup>19</sup> since he likewise often refers to the “unfolding” of certain words,<sup>20</sup> following the usual ancient etymological approach noted just above. Aristotle obviously accepts the specific conventions that provide him with a satisfactory exegetical (and not necessarily linguistic) explanation of words' relations to their respective meanings, as he is not concerned about a word's historical re-constitution: thus, he explains, e.g., the etymology of ἡθική ἀρετή from ἥθος based on the relation between ‘character’ and ‘habit’<sup>21</sup> and αἰθήρ from αἰεῖ + θεῖ,<sup>22</sup> borrowing from the *Cratylus*<sup>23</sup> and not following its linguistic relation to αἴθειν.

Aristotle's linguistic conceptualization does not only pertain to etymological analysis of words but also to the use of etymologies in his own name-assigning and name-coining, as he frequently nominalizes for what he treats. In fact, scholarship owes to him the systematization of terms in several disciplinary fields.<sup>24</sup> Aristotle's language and new terms have created debates among scholars, such as in the case of his categories-terms.<sup>25</sup> In the respective treatise (*Categories*) he states that

It may sometimes be necessary even to invent names, if no name exists in relation to which a thing would be given in a familiar way [οἰκεῖως].<sup>26</sup>

Therefore, he suggests, we should invent names for “unnamed subjects” under discussion, but only on the condition that the new word is given οἰκεῖως, ‘in a

<sup>19</sup> As Sedley stresses (1998, 142), the dialogue's etymologies were generally accepted by ancient authors.

<sup>20</sup> See, e.g., *Physics* 197b29–30; *Nicomachean Ethics* 1103a17–18, 1132a30–32; *On the Soul* 429a2–4 etc.

<sup>21</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics* 1103a17–18.

<sup>22</sup> *Meteorology* 1.3, 339b16–30.

<sup>23</sup> *Cratylus* 410b.

<sup>24</sup> See, e.g., Swiggers/Wouters 2002b, 9–10, regarding linguistic concepts and terms. Eminent scholars have studied significant aspects of Aristotle's semantic practices: see, e.g., Bäck 2000, on Aristotle's theory of predication as assessed in his logic and ontology, as well as De Rijk 2002, concerning the interconnection between Aristotle's semantics and ontology in the context of his argumentative strategies. See also Chriti 2018 for a cognitive approach to the philosopher's semantic views and linguistic practices.

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., Benveniste 1966, 64–66 & 71; Bostock 1994, X–XI; Bäck 2000, 130 ff; Lallot/Ildefonse 2002, 23–24. For a discussion on this issue in the case of Aristotle's terms in the *Categories*, see Chriti 2019a.

<sup>26</sup> *Categories* 7a5–7: ἐνίοτε καὶ ὀνοματοποιεῖν ἴσως ἀναγκαῖον, ἐὰν μὴ κείμενον ᾗ ὄνομα πρὸς ὃ οἰκεῖως ἂν ἀποδοθεῖν (based on the transl. by J.L. Ackrill). See also *Nicomachean Ethics* 1108a17–19. Kotzia made a similar remark: 2007b, 1092.

familiar way'.<sup>27</sup> The adverb οἰκείως should attract our attention when applied by Aristotle for linguistic use, as he often combines it with forms of the verb ἀποδίδωμι ('to define')<sup>28</sup> or λέγω, so as to express that something is rendered in accordance with a certain linguistic usage.<sup>29</sup> Particularly interesting is a text from his *Meteorology*, where he uses the term οἰκείως to approve of an established linguistic use on the basis of an etymological affinity (Arist., *Meteorology* 347a10–12):

οἰκείως τὰ ὀνόματα τοῖς πάθεσιν κεῖται καὶ τισιν διαφοραῖς αὐτῶν· τὸταν μὲν γὰρ κατὰ μικρὰ φέρηται, ψακάδες, ὅταν δὲ κατὰ μείζω μόρια, ὑετός καλεῖται.

Names have been given familiarly to incidents and their various differences; thus, when it rains in small drops this is called 'drizzle', while when it rains more heavily this is called 'rain/shower'. (my transl.)

Apparently, the use of the terms ψακάδες and ὑετός is justified by Aristotle by the fact that they are *familiar* due to their closeness to a given etymology: the form ψεκός (from ψακάς) means 'drop of rain' and is etymologically related with the verb ψακάζω ('to rain in small drops'), while the form ὑετός means 'rain' and derives from the verb ὕω ('to rain'). Aristotle stays faithful to the conceptual and etymological proximity that the nouns have with their respective verbs and, what is more, he adopts their slight semantic differentiation on the basis of their etymology, due to which they have been assigned οἰκείως.

According to Aristotle's own statements, the concepts of convention and familiarity seem to be compatible and, in fact, should be combined in human name-attribution: speakers decide what names to credit, but their decisions should result in "familiar names". Aristotle's own suggestions of names adhere to his advice, as he does not propose random appellations for the new subjects that he discusses: e.g., the category of "doing" is designated by "ποιεῖν", the infinitive of ποιέω meaning 'to do',<sup>30</sup> αὐτόματος ('automatic' for inanimate objects) is used by him with the meaning of 'spontaneity',<sup>31</sup> and he defines κενόν ('void') as 'bereft

<sup>27</sup> Regarding this specific adverb as used by Aristotle and also the respective English translations as "appropriately/properly", which do not render what the philosopher seems to suggest in terms of linguistic use, see Chriti 2019b.

<sup>28</sup> See *LSJ*, s.v. 11.

<sup>29</sup> See, e.g., *Categories* 2b33, 6b37–39, 7a4–7, 7a14, 7a23, 7a31, 7b10; *Nicomachean Ethics* 1119b33; *Physics* 195b3. See Chriti 2019b, 93.

<sup>30</sup> *Categories* 2a3.

<sup>31</sup> *Physics* 195b33–34.

of body'.<sup>32</sup> So also are the cases of ὅρος ('limit'), used and established by Aristotle as 'term of a premise',<sup>33</sup> and σχῆμα ('form, figure'), used by Aristotle in logic as 'figure of a syllogism'<sup>34</sup> and also as 'the grammatical form of a premise'.<sup>35</sup> Nor is Aristotle distanced from these same tactics<sup>36</sup> in naming his famous ἐντελέχεια, even if he creates a totally new word in this case. The existent words ἐν, τέλος, ἔχω, along with their practiced etymologies and semantic contents, are coined to denote the composite new concept, "the inner power guiding to a goal", "the power that keeps a body orientated to its goal":<sup>37</sup> ἐντελέχεια is also suggested οἰκείως, since it derives from widely used linguistic utterances, the meanings of which, as depicted by their respective etymologies, are coined in the new nomination.

Consequently, οἰκείως in linguistic use means for Aristotle "using a word which is etymologically related to utterances that have already been brought into the service of speakers". It is on the basis of existent words and on what Aristotle holds as their etymological content that he suggests a "new" term, either by extending the meaning of an existing word or by coining one of his own.<sup>38</sup>

### 3 Ammonius on Aristotle as a name-giver

Ammonius of Hermeias treats Aristotle's linguistic behavior from the perspective of the two Neoplatonic commentary principles, i.e., the "principle of agreement"<sup>39</sup> between Plato and Aristotle and the principle "explaining Aristotle from

<sup>32</sup> *Physics* 208b25–27.

<sup>33</sup> *Prior Analytics* 24b16.

<sup>34</sup> *Prior Analytics* 26b33.

<sup>35</sup> *Sophistical Refutations* 166b10.

<sup>36</sup> Regarding comments of later philosophers on this particular practice see right below. For a detailed investigation of Aristotle's process of name-assigning, see Chriti 2018.

<sup>37</sup> The definition of ἐντελέχεια given by Bos (2018, 279–290) is followed here.

<sup>38</sup> See Kotzia 2007b, 1091–1092.

<sup>39</sup> On the "principle of agreement", see the classical survey of Karamanolis 2006. The belief that Aristotle basically agreed with Plato was followed by the commentators in different degrees and the only ones who did not apply it were Themistius and, much later, Michael Psellos from the circle of Anna Comnene (see Sorabji 1990b, 3). As a characteristic example see Simpl., *On Categories* 7.29–32; for the evidence that this particular tendency derives from Aristotle's immediate circle, see Kotzia 2007a, 194–201.

Aristotle”.<sup>40</sup> Ammonius presents the distinctive case of a Neoplatonic commentator who is vividly occupied with issues of language<sup>41</sup> and he is the only one, to our knowledge, who applies the principle of agreement between Plato and Aristotle<sup>42</sup> regarding their linguistic views.<sup>43</sup> Ammonius claims that Aristotle fundamentally agrees with Plato in terms of his approach to language and, according to the commentator, Plato’s views are expressed by Socrates in the *Cratylus*,<sup>44</sup> who mediates the two extreme positions of his interlocutors: Ammonius believes that Aristotle is in harmony with what Plato expresses through Socrates,<sup>45</sup> i.e., a wise reconciliation of the two contrasted opinions held in the dialogue.

To comprehend Ammonius’ effort, it has to be primarily stressed that he doesn’t have to delve into Aristotle’s refutation of Cratylus’ view, as the philosopher explicitly declares the conventional character of language. However, Ammonius needs to certify that Aristotle neither adopts the attitude of Hermogenes, since he argues that Aristotle expresses Socrates’ moderated stance. The expounder resorts to Aristotle’s texts to retrieve his examples, following the respective principle (“explaining Aristotle from Aristotle”): he declares that Aristotle expresses his opposition to Hermogenes’ extreme conventionalism in numerous cases in his treatises by showing that he considers names as “consonant with things” (Amm., *On Interpretation* 37.18–19):

δηλοῖ δὲ τοῦτο ἐν πολλαῖς τῶν πραγματειῶν ἑαυτοῦ, σύμφωνα δεικνύναι τοῖς πράγμασι τὰ ὀνόματα πειρώμενος.

He makes that clear in many of his treatises, where he attempts to show that names are consonant with things. (transl. Blank)

What does Ammonius mean by arguing that Aristotle reveals his consent with Socrates (and consequently Plato) by using words “consonant with things”? In what way does Aristotle express Socrates’ compromising and moderating stance towards the two opposite views on language? Before citing specific examples, we

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Aristarchus’ doctrine “explaining Homer from Homer”.

<sup>41</sup> See Chriti 2011a and 2011b.

<sup>42</sup> As Sorabji (2004, 14) stresses, Porphyry and Ammonius were mostly focused on the agreement between Plato and Aristotle.

<sup>43</sup> See also Kotzia/Chriti 2014.

<sup>44</sup> Amm., *On Interpretation* 37.1–5: ὁ τοῖνον ἐν τῷ Κρατύλῳ Σωκράτης διαιτῶν τῷ τε Κρατύλῳ καὶ τῷ Ἑρμογένει διαφορομένοις ἀπὸ διαμέτρου περὶ τοῦ φύσει εἶναι τὰ ὀνόματα ἢ θέσει δείκνυσιν ὡς οὔτε οὕτως ἐστὶ θέσει, ὡς Ἑρμογένους ἡξίου... οὔτε οὕτως φύσει.

<sup>45</sup> Amm., *On Interpretation* 37.14–18: Οὐδὲν οὖν πρὸς ταῦτα διάφορον οὐδὲ ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν τούτοις διατάττεται λέγων οὐδὲν τῶν ὀνομάτων εἶναι φύσει ... καθάπερ καὶ Πλάτων,...

can gain a clue about the character of such Aristotelian utterances from Ammonius' perspective by focusing on his statement a little later to the effect that "since words are attributed by a name-giver in a familiar way (οἰκείως) to things, they could be called as *by-nature*".<sup>46</sup> Consequently, the "familiar way" of name-imposing is acknowledged by Ammonius as "by-nature", i.e., in contrast to Hermogenes' view. Moreover, in his commentary on the *Categories* where Ammonius discusses Aristotle's advice for creating words, as cited above, he relates οἰκείως to the concept of 'common habit/custom' by pointing out that Aristotle advises us to assign names (ὀνοματοποιεῖν) in a familiar way (οἰκείως) if a name does not exist in our customary use (ἐν τῇ κοινῇ συνηθείᾳ).<sup>47</sup> Therefore, Aristotle's encouragement to invent names if we are at a loss for words does not go unnoticed by his commentator and, in Ammonius' eyes, there are words assigned by Aristotle "in a familiar way" which are subsequent to common linguistic habits and for this reason can be considered "by-nature". For Ammonius, this obviously reveals that Aristotle does not adopt Hermogenes' extreme conventionalism.

Ammonius acknowledges as such some of Aristotle's words cited right above, including the case of ἐντελέχεια.<sup>48</sup> The commentator states for the above cases of Aristotle's words that "...[these names] show clearly what the Philosopher thought about these matters [regarding the character of language]".<sup>49</sup> The common attribute of all Aristotelian words which are "consonant with things" was discussed in the previous section and is that the philosopher uses them without differentiating himself from their accepted etymological/semantic status. If special attention is paid to the fact that most of these words are attributed to new subjects and, given their qualification by Ammonius as "compatible with things", a question naturally raised is: "which things does Ammonius mean"? Does the Neoplatonist refer to "already named things", or does he mean "things under discussion, i.e., with no name yet"?

It would be sound to investigate both options: if Ammonius sustains that the "new words" are in accordance with things which are already signified, then he

<sup>46</sup> Amm., *On Interpretation* 36.23–25: τὰ γὰρ ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀνοματοθέτου τιθέμενα ὡς μὲν οἰκείως ἔχοντα πρὸς τὰ πράγματα, οἷς κείνται, φύσει ἂν καλοῖντο; D. Blank translates "οἰκείως" as "appropriately" and his translation is not followed here for the reasons analyzed in Chriti 2019b, 98.

<sup>47</sup> Amm., *On Categories* 72.24–25.

<sup>48</sup> Amm., *On Interpretation* 37.19–24: For example, in the *Physics* lecture, the name of 'spontaneity' and that of 'void', or in the *Meteorology* that of 'raindrop' and 'shower', as well as the names that we know that he posited, such as 'entelechy'...or 'term'...or 'figure'... (transl. D. Blank).

<sup>49</sup> Amm., *On Interpretation* 37.26–27: ...σαφέστατα δηλοῖ τὴν περὶ τούτων τοῦ φιλοσόφου διάνοιαν (transl. Blank).

can only be talking about these words' etymological/semantic connections to things they already designate, such as the case of κενόν, etymologically/semantically related to 'void', which however is proposed for 'bereft of body'. Alternatively, if Ammonius means that "new words" are consonant with "new/unnamed things", then a second question is raised: how are "new words" considered compatible with the "new things" they are bound to represent? In other words, how can a suggested word be "consonant" with a new subject under treatment?

The only way to conceive of such a compatibility seems to include the current concept which is signified by the suggested word (or certain of its parts e.g., in the case of ἐντελέχεια), expressed only via the respective given etymology. Ammonius explicitly declares that things can only be depicted by means of concepts (νοήματα) in *a*) his formulaic expression of the purpose (= subject-matter) of the *Categories*,<sup>50</sup> *b*) his considerations of Aristotle's "semantic triangle"<sup>51</sup> and *c*) his commentary on the *Analytics*:<sup>52</sup> words signify things via concepts. Ammonius argues that only concepts can be "principally and immediately" (πρώτως καὶ ποροεχῶς) designated by words<sup>53</sup> and applied to things that we want to represent or to access.<sup>54</sup> The importance that Ammonius credits to concepts in terms of signification can be of assistance when we attempt to decipher his claim that Aristotle's words are "consonant with things": in either of our options just discussed, the safest way to comprehend Ammonius' argument, is to conceive of a bond between *a*) the new concepts that Aristotle wants to treat and *b*) the vocabulary that he has at his disposal, by means of the already named concepts, i.e., by means of the disposed *etymon*. The designation process that Aristotle seems to follow from Ammonius' point of view demands departure from the new concept in question and a return to it with a proposed word, whether it is a new word or an existing

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50 Amm., *On Categories* 9.17–18; 9.22; 10.3; 10.8; 10.13; 12.1. Ammonius' formulation concerning the subject-matter of the *Categories* is adopted by most of his students: see, e.g., Simpl., *On Cat.* 12.1 ff; Philop., *On Cat.* 10.6–8; Olymp., *On Cat.* 69.15–17; Elias, *On Cat.* 170.15–18 & 176.33–34. On the discussion over the *purpose* of the first logical treatise see the classical study of Kotzias 1992.

51 Amm., *On Interpretation* 24.8, 24.30 & 89.23.

52 Amm., *On Analytics* 1.9 & 1.18.

53 Amm., *On Interpretation* 17.25–28.

54 On more aspects of Ammonius' theory on νοήματα see also Amm., *On Interpretation* 18.28–30. Concepts constitute the images of things in the soul. This view is shared by other commentators too: see, e.g., Simpl., *On Categories* 12.21–25.

one with a more particular meaning, but in both cases it is the given *etymon* which apparently provides him with specific potential:<sup>55</sup>

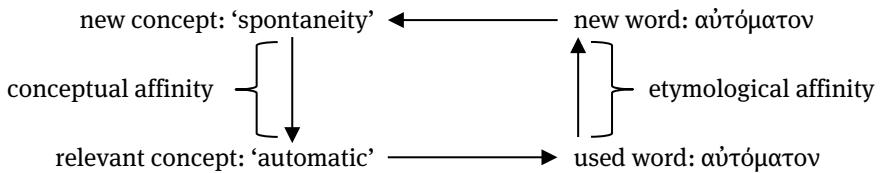


Fig. 1: From new concepts to new etymological relations.

In the above procedure, there are two affinities which permit the attribution of a word to the subject under discussion: It is the semantic/conceptual proximity between what he wants to name and what is already named that constitutes the basis of the procedure of naming what is new, as the named concepts are those that supply the philosopher with the linguistic deposit, so as to pick a suitable word or to coin a new one. Semantic proximity is the first crucial step but the decisive step for a name-giving is the etymological proximity between the utterance in use and the new suggested one.

Our discussion of Ammonius' analysis can be completed by what he says in his commentary on Porphyry's *Introduction*, where he also considers the necessity of suggesting "familiar names".<sup>56</sup> In this text, the Neoplatonist underlines the need of "each art" to invent new names for subjects that emerge, names which could probably seem strange to the listeners/learners. This particular necessity has to be dealt with by each art's own "tools", i.e., by the disposable means of each field, so that the new attributions are familiar to those who perceive them; Ammonius gives an example with the distinctive case of geometers, who have named the diverse types of triangles according to the characteristics of the

<sup>55</sup> See also Chriti 2018 for this specific representation of Aristotle's possible process of name-assigning.

<sup>56</sup> Amm., *On Porphyry's Introduction* 50.19–51.6: And each art (ἐκάστη τῶν τεχνῶν) that aspires to teach something newer and not standard (καινότερον καὶ ξενοπρεπές) beside other arts, attributes names by means of its familiar instruments (τοῖς οἰκείοις ὀργάνοις), so as to accomplish it with clarity; thus, the geometers, who have found many different types of triangles, such as the one that has three equal sides, the other two and another with three unequal ones, have used familiar names (οἰκείοις ὀνόμασιν) and called the first equilateral, the second isosceles and the third scalenus, aiming at designating each with the respective name (my transl., based on the transl. by Blank).



shapes' sides, i.e., based on the existing names of the specific features. Ammonius' exposition here crystallizes the co-existence of the Platonic/Socratic concept of 'art'<sup>57</sup> with the Socratic 'tool', as well as with Aristotle's οἰκείως, into a coherent narrative. Ammonius combines ideas which were considered to be separated up to his time and the outcome is that he applies for the first time such an interpretation of a thinker's linguistic behaviour, by rendering semantic/etymological affinities as "tools" of the art of naming exercised by geometers and other savants;<sup>58</sup> familiarity based on disposable etymologies is presupposed for clarity and every science should use its "familiar tools" in order to assign understandable names.

The invention of "new names", based upon widely accepted etymological/semantic contents, certifies for Ammonius that names are not random in Aristotle's own linguistic use, leading to the wished conclusion, i.e., that the philosopher does not adopt Hermogenes' "total arbitrariness" regarding language: extreme arbitrariness is now proved to be ruled out by "Ammonian" Aristotle, who agrees with Plato as represented by Socrates in terms of his approach to language, for this very reason.

## 4 Concluding remarks

Let us recapitulate: Aristotle in *On Interpretation* declares the conventional nature of language, although he doesn't seem to disapprove his current etymological analysis. Ammonius' aim is to provide evidence for the agreement between Aristotle and Plato in terms of their linguistic approaches and, apparently, he is faced with Aristotle's declaration that language is a product of convention. To moderate the "superficial" inconsistencies between the two thinkers, Ammonius turns from Aristotle's theory to Aristotle's practice and becomes the first interpreter to trace the philosopher's restrictions to linguistic convention as they pertain to etymological/semantic familiarity.

Etymological proximities as exploited in total harmony with human habit is an issue deeply plumbed by Ammonius via Aristotelian onomastics and, not only does the Neoplatonic commentator approve of name-attribution supported by

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<sup>57</sup> In the *Cratylus*, Socrates defines the *techne* which is followed by the name-giver: *Cratylus* 389a2; 393d4; 389d4–390a8; 390e1–4; 387c1 & 6–7; 388c1.

<sup>58</sup> See also Ammonius' remark on the necessity of following a language's structure and rules during word derivation, so that new words do not sound strange to native speakers: *On Categories* 72.16 ff and 73.8 ff.

disposable vocabulary, but he also theorizes it by contextualizing it within the discussion on the character of language. Thus, Aristotle's οἰκείως, which refers to semantic/etymological proximities, is interpreted as a refutation of Hermogenes' extreme conventionalism, and these affinities are explicitly rendered by Ammonius as "tools" of disciplinary fields in name-assigning.

Aristotle's and other philosophers' name-giving policies had been pointed out before Ammonius;<sup>59</sup> nevertheless, he is the first to emphasize the importance of the relation between new words and disposable *signified contents*, i.e., the building of new semantic/etymological connections, on the basis of "old etymologies". As it can be deduced from his general underlining of νοήματα, being primarily designated by words, as well as from his qualification of "new words" as "consonant with things", Ammonius' perspective of Aristotelian nominations certifies what has been stressed by contemporary scholarship about the importance of semantics in ancient etymological approaches.

According to Ammonius, the fact that Aristotle leans on existent words is due to their etymology, i.e., their decoded *signifieds*, which are related to the one he wants to name. In Ammonius' treatment, new semantic/verbal connections are erected because older links are taken for granted: new etymological affinities are essentially built upon given ones, because specific unfolded meanings are used to fold other ones, i.e., previous relations between words and meanings are activated so as to establish new ones, a practice which has much in common with ancient approaches that are considered as "etymological" by contemporary scholars.

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<sup>59</sup> Porphyry (*On Categories* 55.12–24) and Dexippus (*On Categories* 6.10–23) had stressed the attribution of names on behalf of the philosophers. The consideration of the philosophers' practices must date back to the first century BCE, as is obvious in Cicero's *Academica Posteriora* I.7.25; see Kotzia 1992, 23.

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## Part II: **Linguistic Issues**





Claire Le Feuvre

# Implicit Elements in Scholiasts' Etymological Analyses

Whoever has read scholiastic literature knows that studying that kind of texts implies reading between the lines as much as the lines themselves. Most explanations are not as explicit as we would like, and part of the reader's task is first of all to identify the many implicit elements and to restore them to allusive wordings and elliptic formulations. This may have several causes: either the reader is supposed to understand what is at stake, if he is also learned, so that details are not necessary, or a more detailed explanation has been given in another place and the scholiast will not repeat it, or the scholiast reformulates the explanation of a predecessor and drops what he considers less important, or he has not enough space on his writing material (papyrus, manuscript), which leads him to condense his explanation, and so on. Etymological explanations are no exception.

Scholiasts working on Homer were not preoccupied only with etymology. However, the wealth of obscure and obsolete words within Homer's epic language led them very often to propose explanations. And in fact, this is what etymology is used for in scholia: its aim is to explain a difficult word, to justify the assigned meaning by linguistic reasoning (which does not conform to our modern criteria, granted, but is still linguistic reasoning), or to justify the form if it poses a problem (rough breathing or not, diphthong or long vowel, and so on). Thus, as a rule, in the corpus of Homeric scholia we have etymologies only for words which are not usual in Ionic-Attic, since for a usual word which everyone understands, etymology will not bring anything to its understanding.<sup>1</sup>

## 1 Schematic typology of etymological explanations

Four types of explanations can be distinguished. Type [a] is a simple translation into spoken Greek. This is the rule in the so-called lexicographical scholia, especially the D scholia. An instance is ἔντεα· ὄπλα 'arms' (*D Schol.* Γ 339). A synonym is given which has no etymological relationship with the obsolete word. In linguistic terms, such an explanation bears on the signified, not on the signifier, and

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<sup>1</sup> Lallot 1991, 144–145.

is, at first sight, not etymological at all—in fact it may be, as I will show. The same type applies to compound words, for instance ὠκυμορώτατος· ταχυθάνατος ‘doomed to an early death’ (*D Schol.* A 505): each member of the compound is translated into its spoken Greek equivalent. It can be enough to translate one member of the compound if the other one is a usual word, for instance in λευκωλένῳ· λευκοβραχίονι, ἐκπρεπεστάτῃ ‘of the white arms, extremely beautiful’ (*D Schol.* A 572). Here, after the literal translation is added an adjective (ἐκπρεπεστάτῃ) which is not a synonym of the explained word, but says how it should be understood: we are still exclusively on the level of the signified. The *D* scholia were meant to be used in classrooms, and their aim was to make the Homeric text understandable to a citizen of classical Athens.<sup>2</sup>

Type [b] could be called an explicitation: it is also a translation into spoken Greek, but it relies on the etymological link between the lemma and the translation. For instance ἀνθεμόεσσαν· ἄνθη φέρουσσαν ‘bearing flowers’ (*D Schol.* B 695), ὀλοόφρονος· ὀλεθρίου ‘deadly’ (*D Schol.* B 723). The scholiast’s aim is still to explain the signified rather than the signifier: the fact that he translates a compound ὀλοόφρονος through a simple adjective ὀλεθρίου shows that the signifier is not his concern, but, using a word which has an etymological connection with the lemma, he uses the signifier as a means to explain the signified. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish type [b] from type [a]: for instance, I consider βουληφόρον· βουλευτικόν (*D Schol.* B 25) as an explicitation ([b]) rather than a translation ([a]) because of the etymological link between lemma and gloss and because a translation would translate both elements of the compound.

Type [c] bears only on the signifier. An instance is εὐχωλή· ὥσπερ παρὰ τὸ παύσω παυσωλή καὶ ἔλπω ἐλπωρή, οὕτω παρὰ τὸ εὐχω εὐχωλή (*bT Schol.* A 65) “as from παύσω one derives παυσωλή and from ἔλπω ἐλπωρή, similarly from εὐχω one derives εὐχωλή.” The meaning of the lemma is not commented upon, only the formal derivation is. The comment relies on the use of analogy (ὥσπερ), which is very frequent in Greek grammatical works and is meant to show that the process described is regular. Here it is a morphological process (derivation), elsewhere it may be a phonetic process (metathesis, prothesis for instance). Another instance is ἐξ ἐδέων· δασύνεται, παρὰ τὸ ἔζω “with a rough breathing, <because> it comes from ἔζω” (*A Schol.* A 534): the problem here is the form of the stem, namely the presence or absence of the initial aspiration, is lost in psilotic Ionic.

<sup>2</sup> On the different types of scholia, see Dickey 2007, 18–23. For the *Iliad*, *A* scholia and *bT* scholia are quoted after Erbse, *D* scholia after Van Thiel. For the *Odyssey*, the *scholia vetera* are quoted after Pontani for books α–θ, after Dindorf for the others.

The problem is solved through an etymological explanation, but the logical relationship remains implicit:  $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}$  τὸ ἔξω is the argument justifying δασύνεται, but the formulation has no explicit causal conjunction, which I supplied in the above translation. There is nothing about the signified since meaning, as for εὐχολή, is clear, but of course “it comes from ἔξω” could be taken as a semantic indication as well as an etymological one. Type [c] is characterised by the regular presence of  $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}$  τὸ X, ἀπὸ τοῦ X which indicates the etymon: this type can be said etymological in the way we moderns understand it, connecting a base and its derivatives on formal criteria. Type [c] is found predominantly in the A scholia, some of which are repeated in the bT scholia: the A scholia collect the remarks of Aristarchus' followers and are meant for a scholarly audience.

Type [d] is the most complex, bearing at the same time on the signified and the signifier and providing an explanation that justifies the one by the other. This is an etymological explanation in the way Greeks understood etymology: it gives a motivation to unmotivated words and restores a “deep” meaning which is not immediately accessible. An example, which I will analyse in detail later on, is αἰγανέησι· ἄκοντίοις, ἢ  $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}$  τὸ ἄγαν ἔσθαι, ἢ... “with javelins, either from ἄγαν ἔσθαι ‘to throw violently’, or...” (*D Schol.* B 774): we have here first a translation (ἄκοντίοις, type [a]), followed by an explanation which bears on the signified (the javelin is so called because it is thrown violently) and the signifier (the word should be segmented αἰγαν-έη, the first element of which is the adverb ἄγαν ‘exceedingly’ and the second one the verb ἵημι ‘to throw’, given here in the passive ἔσθαι because of course the javelin is thrown and does not throw). The principle is that of a morphological analysis which says “the morphological boundary is here” and identifies in each element thus isolated a word attested in the Greek lexicon, so that the combination of those two words provides a meaning which corresponds to a given characteristic of the referent (the lemma) such that it justifies the denomination of the latter. In the given example, it is a functional characteristic: if the javelin is not thrown violently, it is useless and no longer functional as a weapon. In other cases (see below), it is a formal characteristic. So that one can say that the javelin is rightly named αἰγανέη because the relationship between signifier ([aiganeē]) and “deep” signified (that which is thrown violently) is logical and founded in the nature of the referent. This conception is advocated by Cratylus in Plato's eponymous dialogue, against Hermogenes, who thinks that there is no essential relationship between form and meaning and that names are a matter of convention. There were philosophers and grammarians on both sides of the controversy, but the cratylean conception, although not common, is widespread in scholiastic literature—and in fact, those who do not share this conception do not engage in etymology. But the theoretical framework is

never openly dealt with in scholia (this is not the place for it), so that this fundamental element remains implicit.

The same applies to non-compound words: κόμη· τῆς τριχώσεως, εἴρηται δὲ παρὰ τὸ κόσμον αὐτὴν εἶναι τοῦ σώματος (*D Schol.* A 197) “κόμη: the hair; and it is so named because it is the ornament of the body.” This proposed etymology, which dates back to Herodian (2nd c. CE) at least,<sup>3</sup> links κόμη with κόσμος, which of course modern practice would not do. In the Greeks’ practice, it was not a problem to add a letter or to drop one, so that going from κόσμ to κόμ is quite normal.<sup>4</sup> What is important is that here again the given etymology justifies the denomination κόμη by restoring its “deep” meaning, which is ‘ornament’: that corresponds to a functional characteristic of the hair. This etymology states that κόμη is a kind of κόσμος, the latter being the generic word: we could say in modern words that κόμη is considered a hyponym of κόσμος, and that its phonetic shape is contained in the phonetic shape of the hyperonym κόσμος, the aim of etymology being to bring to light this essential link. Another instance is κουλεόν παρὰ (τὸ) κοῖλον εἶναι (*A Schol.* A 220) “the word κουλεόν ‘scabbard’ is from κοῖλος ‘hollow’,” because the hollow shape is an essential characteristic of a scabbard—there again, modern etymology would disagree on the etymological connection between κολεόν (Hom. κουλεόν through metrical lengthening) and κοῖλος, but would agree that it would not be absurd that the scabbard be named after its hollow shape. In both cases, the etymology relies not only on phonetic similarity (paronymy) but also on an arguable semantic relationship.

As in type [c], the etymological explanation is introduced by παρὰ τὸ X. Type [d], frequent in the A scholia, is not meant for classrooms: we have here scholars writing for other scholars. Neither κόμη nor κολεόν are obscure or rare; they need not be translated as does αἰγανέη, and the etymological explanation is for learned readers—in fact, this is a piece of cratylean etymology.

Different types can be found together in the same scholion (see the instance of αἰγανέη above, where type [a] is followed by type [d]), and often the reformulation of a given explanation leads to a change from one type to another). Those explanations were taught repeatedly over the centuries in schools, and any version we have compiles the preceding ones: the A scholia incorporate part of the D scholia, which are also incorporated into the *Lexica* of Hesychius or Apollonius,

<sup>3</sup> Herodian, *De Prosodia catholica*, Lentz III/1, 325: τὸ μέντοι κόμη βαρύνεται ἀπὸ τοῦ κόσμος γεγονυῖα, “but κόμη is barytone since it is derived from κόσμος” (whereas words in -μή are said to be regularly oxytone). Etymology is here used for the same purpose as in scholiastic literature, to justify the form of the word, here its “irregular” stress.

<sup>4</sup> See already Plato’s *Cratylus* where that kind of manipulation is constant.

and the Byzantine *Etymologica* draw from all these sources. And there may be important differences between different redactions of an identical explanation.

## 2 Successive redactions and reformulations: the case of δολιχόσκιος

I will illustrate this last point with a case study. The different versions of the explanations transmitted for the adjective δολιχόσκιος, epithet of ἔγχος ‘spear’, evince different strategies and concerns. They are listed below according to the criterium of completeness, redactions being labelled from I to V according to the type of information they give, which are represented by numbers in exponent:

<sup>(1)</sup> is the etymon of the word, or the etymons if several etymologies are proposed:

<sup>(1+)</sup> means that the relationship between the lemma and the etymon is explicit (the etymon is introduced by a prepositional phrase παρὰ τὸ, ἀπὸ τοῦ ‘from X’, or the etymon is given first and the compound or derivative is introduced by ὅθεν)<sup>5</sup>

<sup>(1-)</sup> means that the relationship is not explicit (it has to be deduced from the translation and there is no παρὰ τὸ, ἀπὸ τοῦ)

<sup>(2)</sup> is the technical explanation which derives the attested word from its given etymon, which may consist of formal operations (metathesis, apocope, adjunction, contraction...) or semantic ones (metaphor, metonymy, antiphrasis...)

<sup>(3)</sup> is the parallel involved (ὥσπερ), given as a justification of the technical explanation and appealing to analogy<sup>6</sup>

5 The standard way of introducing an etymon is through παρὰ τὸ X: Schol. α 56b2 Pontani αἰμυλίοισι· ἢ ψευδέσιν ἢ συγγενικοῖς, παρὰ τὸ αἶμα “αἰμυλίοισι: or ‘false’ or ‘parent’, from αἶμα.” The formulation with ὅθεν is less precise and more polyvalent, but ὅθεν can, among other meanings, apply to a derivational relationship between two words, hence to an etymological relationship: Schol. δ 612b Pontani μεταστήσω· μετασταθμήσω. τὸ γὰρ ‘στῶ, στήσω’ καὶ ἐπὶ σταθμοῦ λέγεται, ὅθεν γίνεται καὶ ὁ ‘σηκός’, ‘στηκός’ τις ὢν καὶ δηλῶν σταθμόν τινα, ὅθεν καὶ ἡ ἀντιστήκωσις ἀντιστάθμησις τις οὖσα “μεταστήσω: ‘I will replace’ <the presents>. Because στῶ, στήσω can also apply to a weight (σταθμός), and from there comes also σηκός, a \*στηκός, as it were, and referring to some weight, whence also ἀντιστήκωσις ‘compensation’, an ἀντιστάθμησις ‘counterweight’, as it were.” In the latter instance, στήσω, future of ἵστημι, is given as the etymon of σηκός: this implies a formal manipulation, dropping the [t], which remains implicit in the etymological explanation but can be deduced from the \*στηκός τις ὢν with the assumed intermediate step \*στηκός, a ghost word signalled as such by the presence of τις + participle of ‘to be’ after the invented word (similarly at the end of the scholion ἀντιστάθμησις τις οὖσα, \*ἀντιστάθμησις being also a ghost word).

6 As a rule (3) appears only when (2) is present except in purely morphological explanations of type [c], and follows it most of the time.

<sup>(4)</sup> is the contextual justification, either from the immediate context or from a different context—there are several types of contextual justification, which will not be distinguished here to avoid unnecessary complexity.

Most of the time elements <sup>(1)</sup>, <sup>(2)</sup>, <sup>(3)</sup>, <sup>(4)</sup> are introduced in that order. The combination of those elements allows us to distinguish five types:

- Redaction I has all four elements; a subtype is redaction I' which has at least <sup>(1)</sup> and <sup>(4)</sup> but may drop <sup>(2)</sup> and <sup>(3)</sup> because they are not necessary (when there is no formal problem).
- Redaction II has elements <sup>(1)</sup>, <sup>(2)</sup>, <sup>(3)</sup>.
- Redaction III has elements <sup>(1)</sup>, <sup>(2)</sup>.
- Redaction IV has element <sup>(1)</sup> only.
- Redaction V has none of the above elements, but only a translation.

It must be stressed that this has no implication about chronology: a shorter redaction is often the abridged variant of a fuller one, but a fuller redaction can also be a later reformulation mixing two shorter scholia, or the scholiast may have added an explication of his own. In the example given below, the fullest redaction is a late one, mixing different sources.

## 2.1 Δολιχόσκιος, redaction II

Redaction II, the fullest we have for δολιχόσκιος, comes from a D scholion to Z 44:<sup>7</sup>

δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος· τὸ εἰς δολιχὸν διάστημα κίειν δυνάμενον <sup>(1-)</sup> [d] πλεονάσαντος τοῦ σ <sup>(2)</sup>, ὡς καὶ ἐν τῷ θεόσδοτος <sup>(3)</sup>. "Η, τὸ μακρὸν [a], οὗ ἡ σκιά δολιχὴ <sup>(1-)</sup> [b], τοῦτο δὲ ἐκ τοῦ παρακολουθοῦντος. "Η, ὅπερ, διὰ τὸ σκιᾶ ἐντραφῆναι, δολιχὸν γέγονε <sup>(1-)</sup> [d].<sup>8</sup>

δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος: that which can move to a long distance (*etymon*: δολιχόν + κίειν), through adjunction of s (*formal explanation*: *epenthesis of a sibilant*), as in θεόσδοτος

<sup>7</sup> This scholion is given in Van Thiel's edition of the D scholia: it is not found as such in the oldest manuscripts, but comes from Lascaris' 1517 edition (L), who completed the D scholia of his text with scholia of the b family and with Eustathius. Thus, it is not an original scholion, but Lascaris did there what all scholiasts did before him, a patchwork. Eustathius' text is καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις δὲ πολλοῦ δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος λέγει ἢ τὸ μακρὸν, οὗ δολιχὴ καὶ ἡ σκιά, ἢ τὸ εἰς δολιχὸν κίειν ἢτοι εἰς μακρὸν πορευόμενον πλεονασμῷ τοῦ σ ἢ, ὅπερ δολιχὸν γέγονε διὰ τὸ ἐν σκιᾷ τραφῆναι, ὡς καὶ ἀλλαχοῦ ῥηθήσεται (*Comm. II*. 1.663, *ad* Γ 346).

<sup>8</sup> [a], [b], [c], [d] refer to the typology under 1.

(parallel). Or the long one, that which has a long shadow (*etymon*: σκιά), which is the logical consequence. Or that which, because it grew in a shaded place, became long (*etymon*: σκιά).

We have in this scholion several types: translation ([a], μακρόν), explication ([b], οὗ ἡ σκιά δολιχή), etymology ([d], τὸ εἰς δολιχὸν διάστημα κίειν δυνάμενον). In fact we have two etymologies, one analysing the second element as σκιά 'shadow', and the other as κίειν 'to move'. They are not presented in the same way: the etymology by σκιά is simple and does not need a long explanation, not even the precision on the *etymon* παρὰ τὸ σκιά, deduced from the explication οὗ ἡ σκιά δολιχή<sup>(1-)</sup>. It corresponds to a formal characteristic of the referent of the noun of which δολιχόσκιος is the epithet, its shape: with αἰγανέη, a substantive, we operated with the referent-signifier-signified of a single word; here, with an adjective, we must dissociate the referent, which is that of the qualified substantive, from the signified-signifier, which is that of the adjective. Within the frame of this etymology, two different semantic interpretations are suggested, according to the internal syntactic structure of the compound, 'which has a long shadow' (possessive compound, head final), or 'which is long because of the shadow' (determinative compound, head initial): the notion of internal syntax of a compound is never explicit in scholiasts' analyses, but it shows through the translation they give of a given compound.

The etymology by κίειν implies that the second element is the neuter participle κίον 'moving', which could seem logical since the word is an epithet of the neuter noun ἔγχος: however, this is implicit in the scholion, and the formulation τὸ εἰς δολιχὸν διάστημα κίειν δυνάμενον gives the verb under the form of the infinitive κίειν—the participle being the modal verb δυνάμενον. An implication is that, if -κίον is the neuter participle, the inflectional type should be \*δολιχοσκίων, -οντος, whereas in the first interpretation, where the second element is σκιά, the inflectional type must be δολιχόσκιος, -ου: this point is not mentioned, and we cannot know whether it was envisioned by the scholiast. This interpretation gives a meaning which corresponds to a functional characteristic of the referent of ἔγχος: a thrown spear is expected to cover a long distance. Since it is less obvious than the etymology by σκιά, it necessitates further precision, namely, the formal explanation πλεονάσαντος τοῦ σ<sup>(2)</sup> and the parallel which justifies it ὥς καὶ ἐν τῷ θεόδοτος<sup>(3)</sup>.

The parallel in itself is not fully explicit: it relies on an analogy which, fully developed, is \*θεόδοτος : θεόδοτος :: \*δολιχόκιον : x = δολιχόσκιον. We saw a full-fledged analogy in the bT scholion to A 65 which illustrates type [c] above (see 1.): εὐχολή· ὥσπερ παρὰ τὸ παύσω παυσωλή καὶ ἔλπω ἐλπωρή, οὕτω παρὰ τὸ εὐχω εὐχολή. Here, however, the scholion mentions only the second element

of the analogical square, θεόδοτος.<sup>9</sup> That implies that the reader knows that θεόδοτος results from the adjunction of a sibilant between the two elements of the compound of the regular form θεόδοτος (attested in Pindar and as a personal name) and that he will deduce that the expected form would be \*δολιχόκιον, although this is not attested. This use of analogy to justify formal manipulations (here an extra letter) is characteristic of Alexandrian grammarians<sup>10</sup> and frequent in scholia which epitomise their work (A scholia and all later sources). But often the analogy is left for the reader to reconstruct.

## 2.2 Δολιχόσκιος, redaction III

Redaction III is found in an A scholion to Γ 346:

δολιχόσκιον· οἱ μὲν παρὰ τὸ κίειν <sup>(1+)</sup> ἐν πλεονασμῷ <sup>(2)</sup> [d], οἱ δὲ παρὰ τὴν σκιάν <sup>(1+)</sup> [d].

δολιχόσκιον: for some, it comes from κίειν with an adjunction, for others it comes from σκιά.

Here the same two etymologies are mentioned. However, only the second part of the compound is considered, and the first element, δολιχο-, is not mentioned, because it is clear. The relationship with the etymon is explicit for both (παρὰ τὸ κίειν, παρὰ τὴν σκιάν), whereas it is not in redaction II. The scholiast does not examine the meaning of the compound, which is not translated as in redaction II. The meaning must be deduced from the chosen etymology—that leaves open the question of the internal syntax of the compound which is alluded to in redaction II and left aside here. The second etymology (σκιά) is not commented upon. The first one (κίειν) is, but the elements given in redaction II are omitted: there is a mention of the adjunction (ἐν πλεονασμῷ), but which letter is added is not specified,<sup>11</sup> the reader must supply the missing precision, which implies that he must know that a compound of δολιχός and κίειν would be \*δολιχόκιον and that the s is secondary, and no analogical parallel is mentioned at all, that is, element <sup>(3)</sup> is missing.

Redaction III thus appears to be an abridged version of a fuller redaction of type II, several elements of which were omitted either for lack of space (material constraints) or because the scholiast thought they might be supplied easily by a

<sup>9</sup> In the preserved corpus, θεόδοτος is not attested in Homer but appears first in Hesiod (*Op.* 320).

<sup>10</sup> Lallot 2012, 228.

<sup>11</sup> Eustathius has a more explicit πλεονασμῷ τοῦ σ (*Comm. Il.* 1.663).



learned reader, or both. This is frequently the case for A scholia: the manuscript which transmits them, the Venetus A, “contains most of the longer D scholia, but omits explanations with which many scholia begin.”<sup>12</sup> Here, the only explicit elements are the technical data, etymon <sup>(1)</sup> and elliptic comment on the form <sup>(2)</sup>.

## 2.3 Δολιχόσκιος, redaction IV

Redaction IV is transmitted by the *Etymologicum Magnum*, Kallierges p. 282:

δολιχόσκιον· τὸ μέγα καὶ μακρόν [a], ἢ μακρὰν σκιὰν ἀποτελοῦν <sup>(1-)</sup> [b], ἢ μακρὰν πορευόμενον [a], παρὰ τὸ κίειν <sup>(1+)</sup> [d].

δολιχόσκιον: that which is big and long, or which makes a long shadow, or which covers a long distance, from κίειν.

Here too we have different types (translation, explication, etymological explanation). The explanation linking the word with σκιά (which is deduced from the explication [b]) is not commented upon, as it was in redaction III. The explanation linking it with κίειν is, very shortly: it adds the semantic explanation which was lacking in redaction III (μακρὰν πορευόμενον) but says nothing on the form of the word, that is, elements <sup>(2)</sup> and <sup>(3)</sup> are missing. Etymology here is adduced as a justification of the proposed meaning. The semantic explanation is in fact a translation of type [a], the compound is translated by a phrase where μακρὰν translates δολιχό- and πορευόμενον translates -κιον. The complete formulation would be μακρὰν πορευόμενον, παρὰ τὸ κίειν, ὃ ἐστὶ πορεύεσθαι “from κίειν, that is πορεύεσθαι:” the sequence παρὰ τὸ X, ὃ ἐστὶ Y is frequent in Homeric scholia since scholiasts use Homeric words to explain other Homeric words (which conforms to the Aristarchean principle “explain Homer by Homer”), but these words, which need no explanation in a discussion between scholars (A scholia) need to be translated for a less learned audience. Here, however, the equivalence between κίειν and πορεύεσθαι remains implicit. The first element, δολιχός, is only translated and not explicitly given as etymon.

A different type IV redaction is found in the Pseudo-Herodian's *Partitiones* (p. 23):

δολιχόν, τὸ μακρόν, ὅθεν καὶ δολιχόσκιον δόρυ <sup>(1+)</sup>, τὸ μακρὰν σκιὰν ἀποτελοῦν

<sup>12</sup> Van Thiel 2000, 2: “*continet pleraque scholia longiora classis D, sed omittit explicationes, a quibus multa scholia incipiunt.*”

δολιχός, long, whence also δολιχόσκιον δόρυ, making a long shadow.

This one has only the first explanation given in the *Etymologicum Magnum*, and the same translation μακρὰν σκιὰν ἀποτελοῦν, but an etymological relationship is explicit in ὅθεν <sup>(1+)</sup>, which states that δολιχόσκιον is a compound of δολιχός.

## 2.4 Δολιχόσκιος, redaction V

Redaction v is transmitted by several sources (Hesychius, *Suda*, Pseudo-Zonaras),<sup>13</sup> one of which is a D scholion to Γ 346:

δολιχόσκιον· μέγα [a], μακρὰν σκιὰν ἀποτελοῦν [b], ἢ μακρὰν πορευόμενον [a] (mss ZYQX)

δολιχόσκιον· big, making a long shadow, or covering a long distance.

It gives for each interpretation only a translation or an explication, but no etymological explanation. This redaction must be the result of a process of condensation which keeps only the point of departure (the lemma) and the point of arrival (the translation), without any of the intermediate elements which can justify the proposed translation (etymon, formation, parallel). In fact, it does not even keep the central point in the second interpretation, κίειν, which is flatly translated: πορευόμενον is nothing more than the translation of κίον (see redaction IV). Thus, redaction V is a reformulation of a more detailed etymological explanation of type II or III, and is even less explicit than redaction IV since even element <sup>(1)</sup> is not explicit. The D scholion and Hesychius mention the two different interpretations, but this is not the case in the *Suda*, which has only one: δολιχόσκιον· τὸ μακροπόρευτον.

## 2.5 From one redaction to another

Most of the time we do not have all the steps, but only an explanation of type IV, for instance, and we must then reconstruct the missing elements. The case is worse when we have only explanations of type V, that is, only a translation or an explication. From what precedes it appears that there are two types of translations: next

<sup>13</sup> Hesychius, *Lexicon*, delta 2151: δολιχόσκιον· μακρὰν ἔχον σκιάν r. vg, μακρόσκιον Sp ἐξ οὗ τὸ μέγα δηλοῦται· ἢ μακρὰν ἰέναι δυνάμενον. *Suda*, delta 1340: δολιχόσκιον· τὸ μακροπόρευτον. Ps.-Zonaras, *Lexicon*, delta p. 563: δολιχόσκιον. μακρὸν ἢ μέγα ἢ τὸ μακρὰν σκιὰν ἀποτελοῦν ἢ μακρὰν πορευόμενον.

to direct translations of the Homeric word (for instance ὠκυμορώτατος· ταχυθάνατος), there are others which are translations of scholarly explanations of the Homeric word (for instance δολιχόσκιον· τὸ μακροπόρευτον in the *Suda*). The latter imply one or several intermediate step(s) between the lemma and the translation, but as we saw, this intermediate step is often omitted: one is then left with a surprising translation of which the origin is far from clear, and this is especially true for lexicographic scholia and lexicographs, which are primarily concerned with meaning. When, as for δολιχόσκιον, we can compare with other less elliptic scholia, we may have access to cancelled elements, and this allows us to understand how scholiasts worked. But when this is not the case, we have to reconstruct the reasoning lying behind the proposed explanation, thanks to what we know of the scholiasts' method.

### 3 Contextual etymology

One point remains unclear: why, when the analysis 'having a long shadow' is simple and obvious, did scholiasts imagine another one ('covering a long distance') which is not obvious at all? The reason is probably to be sought in the context. The syntagm δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος appears most of the time as the object of the verb προίει 'he throws': there are eleven occurrences of the hemistich προίει δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος in the *Iliad*. Now a recurrent context exerts a greater constraint than a variable one. Throwing (ποίει) implies motion, and this is probably the reason why δολιχόσκιον was analysed as 'covering a long distance, far-reaching'. The epithet 'having a long shadow' has a static meaning, whereas 'covering a long distance' has a dynamic meaning: the latter is in agreement with the context. There is, so to speak, a projection of the meaning of the verb onto the object syntagm: the notion of motion is not compatible with the substantive ἔγχος, so the epithet is the only available target for this projection, and this is what explains the analysis δολιχό-σ-κιον from κίειν. This is a characteristic of scholiastic etymology: since scholiasts explain a text, they seek in the text itself, in that case in the near context, helpful elements and clues to establish the meaning of an obscure word, or even of a very clear one, as is the case here. Contextual justification of a given interpretation is not always explicit—in the case of δολιχόσκιον, it remains implicit. We have to be all the more watchful in order to identify the hidden reason(s) leading the scholiast, or the lexicographer who draws on scholiasts' work, to the interpretation he gives.

## 4 Interferences between distinct synchronies

There may be yet another element in that case. The interpretation δολιχόσκιον ‘covering a long distance’ is problematic because the compound is usual in the *Iliad*, but in the *Iliad* δολιχός always qualifies a physical object, never an abstract notion like a distance, and compounds δολιχο-*X* always mean ‘having a long *X*’ (δολιχεγγής ‘having a long spear’, δολιχήρετμος ‘having long oars’, δουλιχό-δειρος ‘having a long neck’), they are possessive compounds where ‘long’ is the epithet of *X*. The use with an abstract appears in the *Odyssey* only, where δολιχός can be epithet of nouns such as ‘way’, ‘journey’ (δολιχὴν ὁδὸν δ 393, δ 483, ρ 426, δολιχὸν πλῶον γ 169), acquiring thereby a temporal meaning (νύκτα... δολιχὴν ψ 243, δολιχὴ νοῦσος λ 172).<sup>14</sup> And ‘covering a long distance’ is not a possessive compound. It is problematic to assume for a compound of δολιχός, well attested in the *Iliad*, a meaning which the adjective does not have in that poem but only in the younger *Odyssey*, and a compound structure which is not found in other compounds δολιχο-*X*. This was of course not a criterion for Greek scholars for whom there was one poet, Homer, author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and who never had the idea that each poem could reflect a different state of language and that a linguistic study must make a distinction between *Iliad* and *Odyssey*—like many modern scholars, regrettably. And, as we saw above (see 2.1.), compound structure was not a criterion either for Greek scholars. Therefore, the use of δολιχός in the *Iliad* indicates that δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος is a metrically extended form of the unmetrical \*δολιχὸν ἔγχος ‘long spear’ (see the compound δολιχεγγής Φ 155, and the parallel δολιχὸν δόρυ Ν 162, Ο 474, Ρ 607) and that ‘long’ refers to the spear (hence, in the extended form, to its shadow) and not to the distance it covers. But in Attic ὁ δόλιχος, substantivisation of δολιχός <δρόμος> (hence the accent shift), is the longest footrace in gymnastic competitions.<sup>15</sup> The interpretation δολιχό-σ-κιον transposes a syntagm δόλιχον κίειν in which δόλιχον is a cognate object: this is the type found in Xenophon for instance, τὸν δόλιχον θεῖν ‘to run

<sup>14</sup> This is a further reason to condemn Κ 52 # δηθά τε καὶ δολιχόν, with an adverbial use implying the temporal meaning {for a long time}. Lines 51–52 were athetised by Aristarchus on semantic grounds, and this is justified: lines 51–52 ἔργα δ’ ἔρεξ’ ὅσα φημί μελησέμεν Ἀργείοισι || δηθά τε καὶ δολιχόν· τόσα γὰρ κακὰ μήσατ’ Ἀχαιοὺς repeat in chiasma lines 48–49 ἄνδρ’ ἕνα τοσσάδε μέρμερ’ ἐπ’ ἡματι μητίσασθαι, || ὅσσ’ Ἐκτωρ ἔρρεξε Διὶ φίλος υἱὰς Ἀχαιῶν, replacing older ἔρρεξε, ὅσσ(α) by younger ἔρεξε(ε), ὅσα.

<sup>15</sup> Tradition says the institution of the δόλιχος goes back to the 15th Olympic games, at the end of the 8th c. BCE.

the long footrace' (Xen., *An.* 4.8.27). One may therefore wonder whether this interpretation of δολιχόσκιον as meaning 'far-reaching' is not partly suggested by the contemporary state of language of Greek scholars of the 4th and 3rd c. BCE: it would be an anachronism, but of course Greek scholars could not avoid altogether interferences between their language and that of the text they were explaining. Now if Attic τὸν δόλιχον θεῖν provided a model to analyse δολιχό-σ-κιον, this remains of course implicit, since the 'long footrace' is never mentioned in scholia or lexica.

In fact, there may be a trace of this interference, but not in scholia concerned with δολιχόσκιον. The light spear or javelin (αἰγανέη) is sometimes qualified by an epithet δολίχαυλος 'with a long *aulos*' (the *aulos* is the hollow part of the metal spearhead into which the wooden shaft is attached). Most of the time, this compound is correctly explained by scholiasts, but we find a bizarre explanation in a scholion to ι 156 (mss T):

αἰγανέας δολιχαύλους· μακρὰς ἢ ἐπὶ δολιχὸν διήκουσας, δολιχοδρόμους, ἢ τὰς μακρὸν αὐλὸν ἐχούσας [...]

long or covering a long distance, 'of the long race' (δολιχοδρόμους), or which have a long *aulos* [...].

The interpretation 'covering a long distance' is parallel to that of δολιχόσκιον we saw above: we have two names of the spear (the heavy one ἔγχος, the light one or javelin αἰγανέη), qualified by two compounds δολιχο-X, and next to the interpretation which understands the compounds as referring to the physical aspect of the object ('having a long shadow', 'having a long *aulos*'), there is another one which understands it as referring to the function of the object ('covering a long distance'). However, nothing can twist δολίχαυλος toward the notion of race, which is explicit in δολιχοδρόμους... except the fact that the *diaulos* is also a specific race in gymnastic competitions, worth a double stadium in length.<sup>16</sup> Here, the interference between two different synchronies, the contemporary state of language of Greek scholars and the Homeric one, is patent: the translation δολιχοδρόμους for δολιχαύλους implies an equivalence between -αυλος and -δρόμος which can be understood in the specific context of gymnastic competitions only, and cannot be explained otherwise.

<sup>16</sup> According to Pausanias (5.8.6), the institution of the *diaulos* is slightly older than that of the *dolichos* and dates back to the 14th Olympic games. Αὐλός means 'tube', and by metaphor can apply to the stadium because of its shape.

Is this interference responsible for the orientation not only of δολίχαιλος but also of δολιχόσκιον toward the notion of distance covered by the thrown weapon, even though it entails torturing morphology in the case of δολιχόσκιον? Or, the other way around, did the interpretation ‘covering a long distance’ for δολιχόσκιον, due to the influence of the context and the paronymy with κίειν, lead scholiasts to assign the same meaning to the parallel compound δολίχαιλος because they had the *diaulos* in mind? We cannot answer this question because the explanations are elliptic: scholiasts do not even explicitly draw the parallel between δολίχαιλος and δολιχόσκιον ‘covering a long distance’ and do not mention the one when they explain the other.<sup>17</sup> This example shows how comparison between different scholia, even though they seem to have nothing in common (it is a different word and a different line), may bring to light elements which remain implicit in each scholion and help us understand the scholiast’s interpretation of the word.

## 5 Contexts and corpus: the case of αἰγανέη

I hinted above (see 3.) at the role of context in scholiastic etymological explanations, meaning the immediate context in which a word appears. The problem is that most of the time a given word appears in different contexts... which are used to justify different explanations. I will illustrate this point with the noun taken as a prototypical example of type [d], αἰγανέη ‘javelin’, an epic word which did not belong to the living lexicon of classical Ionic, Attic or koine.

### 5.1 Javelins and goats

The fullest redaction is found in a scholion to δ 626 (mss E, beginning of the 14th c.):

*Schol.* δ 626g1 Pontani: αἰγανέα δὲ λέγεται τὸ μικρὸν ἀκόντιον [a]. Γίνεται δὲ ἐκ τοῦ κατ’ αἰγὸς ἴεσθαι <sup>(1+)</sup> [d], ὃ ἐστὶ πέμπεσθαι· ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἄγαν ἴεσθαι <sup>(1+)</sup> πλεονασμῷ τοῦ ι <sup>(2)</sup> [d]· ἢ

<sup>17</sup> Eustathius, *Comm. Il.* 1.388 (*ad B* 460), mentions both compounds together, with the correct explanation: ἐκ δὲ τῆς λέξεως ταύτης καὶ δρόμος ἐναγώνιος ὁ δολιχός [...] σύγκειται δὲ ἀπ’ αὐτῆς καὶ τὸ δολιχόσκιον καὶ δολίχαιλοι αἰγανέαι, ὃ ἐστὶ μακροὺς αὐλοὺς ἔχουσαι, ἦγουν κοιλότητος ἐπιδορατίδων, αἷς ὁ τοῦ ξύλου καυλὸς ἐνίεται “from this word is named also the race ὁ δολιχός [...] and compounds from it are δολιχόσκιον and δολίχαιλοι αἰγανέαι, which means ‘having long tubes’, that is, the hollow part of the spearpoint, into which the wooden shaft is attached.”

παρὰ τὸ τὴν ἀγκύλην ἐξ αἰγείων δερμάτων εἶναι <sup>(1-)</sup> [d]· ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ κατὰ τῶν αἰγῶν νέεσθαι <sup>(1+)</sup> [d]· ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἄγαν νέεσθαι <sup>(1+)</sup> [d]

αἰγανέα is the name of the small javelin. It comes from the fact that it is thrown, that is, sent, at goats; or it comes from 'to be thrown violently' with adjunction of *i*; or from the fact that the propeller is made out of goat skin; or from the fact that it goes against goats; or from the fact that it goes violently.

The scholion starts with a translation (τὸ σμικρὸν ἀκόντιον), followed by several etymological proposals which have a common point: all parse the word as a compound. This corresponds to a general tendency already present in Plato's *Cratylus*, and systematic in the work of Hellenistic grammarians, to consider all long words as compounds which have to be reduced to simple elements (which is often the case as a rule of thumb, but of course not always).<sup>18</sup> This agrees with a conception according to which complexity rises from the combination of simpler elements, language being no exception. Thus, the decomposition into simpler elements will give access to the "deep" meaning which is the aim of etymology (see 1.). The proposed explanations for αἰγανέη show two divergences: on the internal boundary between the two elements (segmentation αἰγαν-έη or αἰγα-νέη) and, correlative of the latter, on the identification of the simple elements (αἰγ- 'goat' or ἄγαν 'exceedingly', and ἔημι 'throw' or νέομαι 'return, go back', which here is taken with a more general meaning 'to go'). Segmentation as such is not mentioned explicitly as an issue: it must be deduced from the divergent identification of simple elements. This yields the following four possibilities, in the order in which they are proposed by the scholion: αἰγ- + ἔημι, ἄγαν + ἔημι, then an explanation identifying 'goat' but saying nothing about the second element, then αἰγ- + νέομαι, ἄγαν + νέομαι. The word ἄγαν, allegedly the etymon, is not attested in Homer: we cannot know whether Greek etymologists paid any attention to that; at any rate they do not mention the problem.

The third explanation, παρὰ τὸ τὴν ἀγκύλην ἐξ αἰγείων δερμάτων εἶναι, is Schol. δ 626f Pontani (αἰγανέησιν· δορατίοις. παρὰ τὸ τὴν ἀγκύλην ἐξ αἰγείων δερμάτων εἶναι, found in several manuscripts older than E), incorporated into Schol. δ 626g1 where it did not belong originally<sup>19</sup>—an instance of mixing of different sources, which in this case disrupts the logical sequence of the four explanations given in Schol. δ 626g1. It does not say anything about the second element, which is why I labelled it <sup>(1-)</sup>. But, since the propeller (ἀγκύλη, which is

<sup>18</sup> Lallot 2012, 238.

<sup>19</sup> E has in fact an erroneous spelling ἀγῆνην instead of ἀγκύλην. Dindorf corrected the text after Schol. δ 626f.

a leather strap) is used to throw the weapon, this explanation probably also understands the word as a compound of αἶγ- + ἦμι, thus implying an etymology by a word which is not even mentioned.<sup>20</sup> Since this explanation comes after the preceding ones, where the reference to ἦμι is explicit, the scholiast of Schol. δ 626g may have dispensed with it because in the context it was recoverable—however, this is originally Schol. δ 626f inserted into another scholion, and in Schol. δ 626f there is no clue provided by the context, and the etymon is not mentioned either. If we did not have the first two explanations of Schol. δ 626g, we would certainly not guess that παρὰ τὸ τὴν ἀγκύλην ἐξ αἰγείων δερμάτων εἶναι describes a compound of αἶγ- + ἦμι which differs from the first explanation by the internal syntax of the compound: ἐκ τοῦ κατ' αἰγὸς ἔσθαι means that αἰγανέη is used to hunt goats (the first element would be a directive accusative), παρὰ τὸ τὴν ἀγκύλην ἐξ αἰγείων δερμάτων εἶναι means that αἰγανέη is propelled by means of a leather strap (the first element would be an instrumental). And as a consequence, we would not understand the implicit etymon in Schol. δ 626f. There again, comparison with other scholia is necessary. Since the internal syntax of compounds is never an explicit issue for scholiasts, we should not project our modern ideas about linguistic description onto their description: at least the periphrases given as explanations show that they were aware of the problem, although it is not formulated overtly.

If we compare this scholion with the “scale” proposed for δολιχόσκιον, it would correspond to a redaction of type III, lacking several elements: for all the proposed etymological explanations the etymon is explicitly given (παρὰ τὸ X), for one of them there is a comment on the form of the word (πλεονασμῷ τοῦ ι), but without the parallel which could justify the adjunction, therefore we have elements <sup>(1)</sup> and <sup>(2)</sup>. And there is no element which would justify the link with ἦμι:

**20** This is odd for us, but not so for ancient scholars. An instance of elliptic etymology where the etymon as such is not mentioned but “translated” by a synonym is Apollonius Soph., *Lexicon homericum*, p. 147: ἀρητήρ ὁ ἱερεὺς, ἀπὸ τοῦ ὑπὲρ τῶν θυόντων τὰς εὐχὰς ποιεῖσθαι “ἀρητήρ is the ‘priest’, called thus from the fact that he makes prayers on behalf of those who sacrifice.” The intended etymon is ἀρά: however, it is not given explicitly, but replaced by its synonym εὐχή, and it is left to the reader to identify the real etymon behind εὐχάς. The complete formulation would be ἀπὸ τοῦ ὑπὲρ τῶν θυόντων τὰς <ἀράς, ὃ ἐστίν> εὐχάς, ποιεῖσθαι. The reason is probably that ἀρά originally meant ‘prayer’ but that in first century *koine* it was specialized in the (already ancient) meaning ‘malediction’, which of course could not account for ἀρητήρ, so that in the older meaning it had to be translated, so to speak, into a synchronic equivalent. Other similar instances will be found on the Etygram website (<http://appsweb-cepam.unice.fr/etygram>). In the case of scholion δ 626f Pontani the etymon ἔσθαι is cancelled and not even replaced by a synonym.



no morphological analysis of the second element thus identified tries to relate it to a given inflectional form of ἵημι. Maybe the final -έη was compared with forms like the aorist ἔηκε (where ε- is the augment!) or the aorist subjunctive ἀφ-έη (Π 590), but this remains implicit.<sup>21</sup>

## 5.2 Shorter redactions

Other redactions correspond to a redaction of type IV:

*D Schol.* B 774: αἰγανέησι· ἀκοντίους [a], ἢ παρὰ τὸ ἄγαν ἵεσθαι <sup>(1+)</sup> [d], ἢ παρὰ τὸ εὐθετεῖν αὐτὰς εἰς αἰγῶν ἄγραν <sup>(1+)</sup> [d] (mss ZQR).

Αἰγανέησι: with javelins, either from 'to be thrown violently' (ἄγαν ἵεσθαι), or from the fact that they are appropriate for goat-hunting.

We have here the etymon, fully explicit in παρὰ τὸ ἄγαν ἵεσθαι, partly implicit in the second explanation where the second element of the compound is not identified, but no comment on the form of the word, that is, element <sup>(2)</sup> is missing.

Another redaction of type IV is found in a scholion to Oppian's *Halieutica* which, however, gives a different semantic interpretation of the combination αἶξ + νέομαι (comparison 'like a goat'):

*Schol. Oppianum*, Hal. 1.712: αἰγανέης· εἶδος ἀκοντίου παρὰ τὸ δίκην αἰγὸς νέεσθαι ταχὺ <sup>(1+)</sup>, τάχα δὲ παρὰ τὸ ἄγαν νέεσθαι καὶ πορεύεσθαι <sup>(1-)</sup>.

Αἰγανέης is a kind of javelin, from the fact that it goes quickly like a goat, or maybe from the fact that it goes and moves violently.

In other scholia only one interpretation is mentioned:

*b Schol.* Π 589 (BCE<sup>3</sup>, 589a2 Erbse): αἰγανέη εἴρηται ἀπὸ τοῦ νεῖσθαι εἰς αἶγας <sup>(1+)</sup> [d]. ἔστι δὲ εἶδος ἀκοντίου [a].

Αἰγανέη is named after the fact that it goes against goats; it is a kind of javelin.

<sup>21</sup> One could suggest that Π 589–590 has played a role in this interpretation: ὅσση δ' αἰγανέης ῥίπη ταναοῖο τέτυκται, || ἦν ῥά τ' ἀνὴρ ἀφέη "as far as goes the driving cast of a slender javelin which a man throws" (transl. R. Lattimore). In these lines αἰγανέη is found together with a form of ἵημι which matches exactly the end of the word, and the javelin is the relativised object of ἀφέη.

*Schol.* δ 626g2 Pontani: αἰγανέησιν· μακροῖς ἀκοντίοις (mss Y) [a] / δορατίοις ἐπιτηδείοις εἰς αἰγῶν θήραν <sup>(1-)</sup> (mss N) [d] / κονταρίοις (mss C) [a] / εἶδος κονταρίου (mss G) [a].

αἰγανέησιν: large javelins. Small spears appropriate for goat-hunting. Small spears, kind of spear.

In the b scholion to Π 589, the etymon is explicit for both elements of the compound (ἀπὸ τοῦ νεῖσθαι εἰς αἶγας). In the second scholion of δ 626g2 Pontani, coming from mss N, the etymon is implicit and refers to the first element only (εἰς αἰγῶν θήραν), but this still is a redaction of type IV, as opposed to type V in the explanations from mss Y, C and G.

Hesychius, *Lexicon*, alpha 1683: αἰγανέας· ἀκόντια [a], ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰγείοις ἰμάσι ἡγκυλῶσθαι <sup>(1-)</sup> [d]

Αἰγανέας: javelins, from the fact that they are propelled with goatskin straps.

Both the b scholion and Hesychius give only one interpretation (not the same one) and drop the other ones found in the fullest redaction. This choice deliberately deletes information considered unnecessary or erroneous. Hesychius' is a reformulation of the παρὰ τὸ τὴν ἀγκύλην ἐξ αἰγείων δερμάτων εἶναι (*Schol.* δ 626f Pontani) and leaves also the second element in the dark.

The least developed explanation, consisting of a translation and no more (corresponding to redaction V), is found for instance in Hesychius, *Lexicon*, alpha 1684: αἰγανέης· τοῦ δόρατος [a] “of the spear,” and in other lexicographers.

### 5.3 Contextual justification

However, for this word a new type of etymological justification appears, namely the reference to given lines of the epic corpus. Thus, we find in a T scholion to Π 589 (589a1 Erbse):

αἰγανέης· διὰ τὸ εἰς αἶγας γενέσθαι <sup>(1)</sup> [d]· ὥρσαν δὲ Νύμφαι... αἶγας ὄρεσκόους ... καὶ αἰγανέας ... εἰλόμεθ' <sup>(4)</sup>

αἰγανέης: because they are used against goats: “and the Nymphs... sent forth wild mountain goats... and we seized... our javelins” (l 154–157).

Here meaning and etymology are justified by means of a reference to lines where αἶξ and αἰγανέη are co-occurring in the Homeric text. They are not the lines which the scholion is commenting upon (Π 589) but lines from the other Homeric poem which have no common point with Π 589 except that there too appears αἰγανέη.

The lines of the *Odyssey* thus quoted are not signaled as a quotation (we do not have φησὶ γάρ ‘for he says’), and the fact that they are introduced as a justification of the proposed etymology is also implicit. The reader is supposed to be able to identify the Homeric quotation by himself. Moreover, the quotation is truncated: within four lines, the scholiast picks up the elements of interest to him, even though αἶγας and αἰγανέας in ι 154–157 belong to two different sentences and have no syntactic relationship with each other.<sup>22</sup> But syntax is not an issue here; what is important is co-occurrence: the underlying reasoning is that syntagmatic proximity can point to etymological relationship—but that, of course, is never explicitly stated. Fundamentally, this is an Aristarchean method, according to the principle “explain Homer by Homer,” which means to explain a Homeric word by one of its Homeric occurrences. This use of context is different from the one we saw for δολιχόσκιον (see 3.): here what matters is not finding an etymological meaning which fits the attested context, but finding somewhere in the Homeric corpus itself a context which materialises the etymological link proposed by etymologists, materialisation which is used as a confirmation. This is an instance of redaction I’ (see 2.), which has <sup>(1)</sup> and <sup>(4)</sup> but lacks <sup>(2)</sup> and <sup>(3)</sup>.

We may therefore wonder whether in the other redactions there is not a missing element, which would be this contextual justification found in *T Schol.* Π 589 for the meaning ‘fit for goat-hunting’. This is likely, although it cannot be proved. The association of αἰγανέη with αἶξ clearly has a purely paronymic basis, but then the choice of the goat as the aim of the javelin can have been inferred from a specific context.

## 5.4 Implicit contextual justification

The analysis of αἰγανέη as a compound of ἦμι receives the same kind of justification in Apollonius’ *Lexicon homericum* (1st c. CE), Bekker p. 17:

αἰγανέας τὰ ἀκόντια [a]. οἱ μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰγείοις ἰμάσιν ἡγκυλωσθαι <sup>(1-)</sup> [d], οἱ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἄγαν ἔεσθαι <sup>(1+)</sup> [d], οἱ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ διὰ τῶν αἰγείων ἰμάντων ἰέναι <sup>(1+)</sup> [d]. λέγει δὲ οὕτω ‘καὶ αἰγανέας δολιχαύλους’ ‘καὶ αἰγανέησιν ἰέντες τόξοισιν τε’. <sup>(4)</sup>

<sup>22</sup> The lines are: ὤρσαν δὲ Νύμφαι, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο, || αἶγας ὄρεσκάφους, ἵνα δειπνήσειαν ἑταῖροι. || αὐτίκα καμπύλα τόξα καὶ αἰγανέας δολιχαύλους || εἰλόμεθ’ ἐκ νηῶν, “Nymphs, aegis-bearer Zeus’ daughters, roused mountain goats so my comrades could have dinner. At once we grabbed curved bows and goat spears with long collars from the ships” (transl. J. Huddleston, who through the translation ‘goat spears’ chooses to keep the alleged *figura etymologica* assumed by the scholiast).

Αἰγανέας; javelins; for some, because they are propelled by goatskin straps; for others, because they are thrown violently; for others because they move thanks to their goatskin propellers. And Homer says that: ‘καὶ αἰγανέας δολιχαύλους’ (ι 156) ‘καὶ αἰγανέησιν ἰέντες τόξοισιν τε’ (B 774–775).

Apollonius mentions three etymologies: the first two are identical with those of Schol. δ 626g1 Pontani (αἰγ- + ἦμι and ἄγαν + ἦμι, see 5.1.); the third seems to be a new one, identifying the second element of the compound as ἰέναι ‘to go’, unless it is a mistake for ἰέναι ‘to throw’—but the active infinitive, and not the passive ἔσθαι as in the other scholia and in the first two explanations of Apollonius himself, speaks against this possibility. Among the explanations identifying ‘goat’ as the first element, he retains the goat only as the material of the propeller (that is, the instrumental in the internal syntax of the compound), and not as the aim of the weapon (that is, the accusative in the internal syntax). Maybe the other explanation was mentioned in the original redaction, too, but cancelled: Apollonius’ *Lexicon* as we have it is only an epitome, not the original work, which had more detailed explanations.

The reference to a Homeric syntagm is explicit (λέγει δὲ οὕτω) and comes last. Here we have two quotations. What is not explicit is the fact that these quotations are introduced as justifications for the proposed etymologies, since we have δέ and not γάρ. And in the same way as one in the same scholion can list several meanings for the same lemma and propose several etymologies (“either... or... or...”; “for some... for others...”), as for the two words taken as case studies here, a scholiast or lexicographer can give in a row two different contextual justifications for two different proposed etymologies, without bothering to say which is for which—this again is left for the reader to explicate. The second quotation, καὶ αἰγανέησιν ἰέντες τόξοισιν τε, is used to back the etymology ἀπὸ τοῦ ἄγαν ἔσθαι, but this is not said explicitly, and the quotation does not immediately follow the etymological explanation it is supposed to prove, since in between come another explanation and another quotation. The link, deduced from the common element ἦμι, is nevertheless clear. This justification is of the same type as the one we have seen in the T scholion to Π 589 (see 5.3.): it takes argument from syntagmatic proximity as a materialisation of the etymological relationship between the considered words, although they are independent from the syntactic point of view in the Homeric lines, which Apollonius does not care about (the full quotation is B 774–775 δίσκοισιν τέρποντο καὶ αἰγανέησιν ἰέντες || τόξοισιν τε, where the datives depend on τέρποντο, not on ἰέντες, and in fact

Apollonius' quotation as we have it is truncated, too).<sup>23</sup> This explanation with the same quotation, but not truncated, is also found in Eustathius (*Comm. Il.* 1.539, *ad B 774*).

And, because scholia and lexicography are a symphonic corpus where one voice answers to another, Apollonius brings us back to αἰγανέας δολιχαύλους. It is no more than αἰγανέησι ἰέντες τόξοισιν τε referred explicitly to one of the proposed etymologies, and the reader has to identify on his own the etymological explanation which this quotation is supposed to prove. That is easy for αἰγανέησιν ἰέντες, less so for αἰγανέας δολιχαύλους which has no word in common with the proposed etymological explanations. There again, Apollonius' reasoning (or his source's) relies on an implicit element which we have to explicitate.

First of all, we saw that two interpretations were proposed by scholiasts for αἰγανέας δολιχαύλους (see 4.), either 'with a long *aulos*' (which is the correct translation) or 'far-running' (because of the interference with the *diaulos*). Obviously here only the second one is meant, not the first, since there is no link between the length of the metallic spearhead and the idea that it 'is thrown violently' or 'is propelled by goatskin straps' or 'moves thanks to goatskin straps'. Whereas there is a link between 'far-running' and 'moving thanks to goatskin straps', this link being the notion of movement (ἰέναι). Thus, there is a choice between the two interpretations of δολιχαύλους, which is an implicit choice. This means that the interpretation of δολιχαύλους as 'running a long distance' dates back to the first century CE at least. And in fact, we would be at pains to understand why Apollonius quotes here αἰγανέας δολιχαύλους, 'with a long *aulos*', and how it can be a justification of any of the proposed explanations if we did not have the scholion to ι 156 which is the most direct trace of the interpretation of δολιχαύλους as referring to a race and meaning 'far-running' (δολιχοδρόμους)—all the more so since Apollonius himself gives under the lemma δολιχαύλους the correct explanation μακρὸν τὸν αὐλὸν ἐχούσας (*Lexicon homericum* p. 59) and makes no allusion to the meaning 'running'. This heterogeneity within the work of one and the same lexicographer implies that under the lemma αἰγανέας he quotes αἰγανέας δολιχαύλους as an argument of other scholars (οἱ δὲ) which he repeats, and that does not reflect his own interpretation of the word, which he gives under the concerned lemma. The fact that he repeats other scholars' hypothesis is explicit when he lists the explanations (οἱ μὲν ... οἱ δὲ... οἱ δὲ...), but not when he brings in the quotations from Homer.

<sup>23</sup> Hesychius, *Lexicon*, alpha 1685 has the same truncated quotation αἰγανέησιν ἰέντες as the lemma: αἰγανέησιν ἰέντες· τοῖς δόρασι βάλλοντες, τοῖς πάνυ ὑψοιμένοις. This implies a common source.

Thus, this quotation αἰγανέας δολιχαύλους is probably introduced as a justification of the explanation ἀπὸ τοῦ διὰ τῶν αἰγείων ἱμάντων ἰέναι “because they move thanks to their goatskin straps.” Contrary to the quotation αἰγανέησιν ἰέντες where there is a real co-occurrence of the word to be etymologised (αἰγανέη) with the simple word which is given as etymology (ἰέναι), in the case of αἰγανέας δολιχαύλους there is no such thing: δολιχαύλους does not contain ἰέναι ‘to go’. But although it does not contain ἰέναι formally, it does so semantically if it means ‘far-running’. As a result, the use of the quotation αἰγανέας δολιχαύλους as a justification of ἀπὸ τοῦ διὰ τῶν αἰγείων ἱμάντων ἰέναι relies, not on the co-occurrence of the word to be etymologised (αἰγανέη) with a simple word given as etymology (ἰέναι) but on the co-occurrence of the word to be etymologised with a word which is semantically equivalent to the word given as etymology: this equivalence is loose indeed, since δολιχαύλους and ἰέναι are different parts of speech and αὐλός does not mean ‘race’ but ‘stadium’, and of course it is not explicit. Needless to say that one can “justify” almost anything with such a method, a fact which accounts for some bizarre cases where the adduced Homeric quotation seems to have no direct link with the proposed explanation and thus to be gratuitous: in fact, it is not, but one has to reconstruct first the implicit steps through which the etymological reasoning proceeds.

The same method of looking for co-occurrences in the corpus can lead to as many different results as there are different contexts. I have discussed this point elsewhere, regarding other types of reasoning on an etymology’s context.<sup>24</sup>

## 5.5 Context and transfer of etymology

The etymology ἄγαν + νέομαι provided for αἰγανέη is also found, unexpectedly, for an adjective which has nothing to do with javelins, ἄγανός ‘mild’.

*Schol. ε* 124a Pontani: οἷς ἀγανοῖς: ἢ τοῖς ταχυστάτοις παρὰ τὸ ἄγαν νεῖσθαι <sup>(1+)</sup>, ἢ τοῖς μὴ γάνος ἐμποιοῦσιν <sup>(1-)</sup> (mss E).<sup>25</sup>

οἷς ἀγανοῖς] either the swiftest ones, from ‘to go (νεῖσθαι) violently (ἄγαν)’, or those which do not produce rejoicing (γάνος).

The second analysis parses the adjective as a privative compound ἄ- + γάνος; it is formally straightforward (at least by Greek standards: a regular compound of

<sup>24</sup> Le Feuvre 2015, 37–42.

<sup>25</sup> On the history of this scholion, see Pontani 2016, 329–330.

the s-stem γάνος would be \*ἀγανής) but semantically awkward for an adjective meaning 'mild', and possible here only because in this line it refers to the killing arrows of Artemis (ε 124 <Artemis> οἷσ' ἀγανοῖσι βέλεσσιν ἐποιομένη κατέπεφνεν). That is, it is a contextual etymology which is designed for one context only and cannot be transposed to other contexts.<sup>26</sup> The first analysis ἄγαν + νέομαι clearly does not fit the meaning of ἀγανός either and is not the usual etymology provided for the adjective.<sup>27</sup> The same explanation is found in Schol. γ 280a Pontani, for the parallel Homeric line (<Apollo> οἷσ' ἀγανοῖσι βέλεσσιν ἐποιοχόμενος κατέπεφνε):

*Schol. γ 280a3 Pontani:* ἀγανοῖς· ἢ ταχυτάτοις, ἄγαν ἰεμένοις<sup>(1-)</sup>. καὶ ἀγανός ἐτυμολογεῖται ἀπὸ τοῦ ἄγαν νέειν εἰς αὐτὸν πάντας<sup>(1+)</sup>, ὥς καὶ ἀγαθός ἀπὸ τοῦ ἄγαν θέειν περὶ αὐτόν· τὸν γὰρ ἀγαθὸν πάντες φιλοῦντες εἰς αὐτὸν τρέχουσιν. ὁμοίως καὶ εἰς τὸν ἀγανὸν ἦτοι λαμπρὸν καὶ ἐνάρετον πάντες πορευόμεθα (mss B).

οἷς ἀγανοῖς] either the swiftest ones, thrown violently; and ἀγανός comes etymologically from the fact that all 'go with force' (ἄγαν νέειν) to him, as ἀγαθός from 'to run with force' (ἄγαν θέειν) around him, since all of us, loving the good one, run toward him. Similarly, we all go to the one who is mild, that is, shining and virtuous.

The competing etymology ἄγαν + ἦμι provided for αἰγανέη is also found for ἀγανός:

*Schol. γ 280a1 Pontani:* ἀγανοῖς· [...] ἐτυμολογεῖται δὲ ἐκ τοῦ α στερητικοῦ μορίου καὶ τοῦ γάννυμαι<sup>(1+)</sup>, ἢ ἐκ τοῦ ἄγαν ἰεμένοις<sup>(1+)</sup> (mss M<sup>a</sup>).

ἀγανοῖς: [...] it comes etymologically from the privative prefix ἀ- and the verb γάννυμαι 'to rejoice', or from the fact that they are thrown violently.

<sup>26</sup> However, some managed to make this etymology suitable for other contexts by assuming that the ἀ- is not the privative, but the "intensive" prefix: Ἀγανοὶ μὲν λόγοι οἱ προσηγεῖς παρὰ τὸ α ἐπιτατικὸν καὶ τὸ γάννυσθαι, οἷς τις ἄγαν γάννυται ἡγουν χαίρει· [...] ἐν δὲ ῥητορικῇ Λεξικῇ γράφεται ταῦτα· Ἀγανὸν τὸ καλὸν καὶ ἡδὺ καὶ προσηγές· ποτὲ δὲ καὶ κατὰ ἀντίφρασιν τὸ χαλεπὸν "ἀγανοὶ λόγοι means 'gentle' words, from the intensive alpha and the verb γάννυμαι, those in which one rejoices a lot [...] here is what is written in the *Lexikon rhetorikon*: ἀγανόν means 'nice', 'sweet' and 'gentle', but sometimes it means 'painful', by antiphrasis" (Eustathius, *Comm. Il.* 1.305, ad B 189). The latter meaning 'painful' refers to the two instances of ἀγανοῖσι βέλεσσιν.

<sup>27</sup> Apollonius Soph. *Lexicon homericum*, Bekker p. 7: ἀγανοῖς ἄγαν αἰνετοῖς, προσηγέσιν. This etymology also parses the word as a compound of ἄγαν, but the second element is different.

Schol. γ 280a2 Pontani: ἀγανοῖς λαμπροῖς (mss M<sup>1</sup>) / ταχυτάτοις (mss H) / τοῖς ἄγαν ἰεμένοις<sup>(1-)</sup> (mss EHs) / τοῖς ὀξυτάτοις (mss Es).

ἀγανοῖς: shining. Swiftest, which are thrown violently. Sharpest.

Those etymologies of ἀγανός are found only for the line οἷσ' ἀγανοῖσι βέλεσσιν ἐπιχόμενος/-η κατέπεφνε, not for other instances of ἀγανός: they are contextual etymologies, accounting for one context of use.<sup>28</sup> They come in Schol. γ 280a3 (mss B) and Schol. ε 124a (mss E) as a justification of the meaning ταχυτάτοις 'swiftest'; in Schol. γ 280a2, this is also the case for mss H, but not for mss E and s: both E and s are younger than H and belong to a different branch, and the agreement between H and B (ταχυτάτοις, (τοῖς) ἄγαν ἰεμένοις) on the one hand, the parallelism of that redaction with E for Schol. ε 124a (ταχυτάτοις παρὰ τὸ ἄγαν νεῖσθαι) on the other, suggests that the older redaction is ταχυτάτοις, (τοῖς) ἄγαν ἰεμένοις and that E and s have an abridged redaction τοῖς ἄγαν ἰεμένοις without ταχυτάτοις, but with ὀξυτάτοις instead: the position of the latter at the end of the scholion agrees with the fact that it was added to the original redaction.

What can be seen here is a transfer of the etymologies designed for the noun αἰγανή, ἄγαν + νέομαι and ἄγαν + ἵημι, to a word which has a remote phonetic similarity with αἰγανή and belongs to a different class of words (adjective), but is used in a noun phrase where it is the modifier of βέλος 'missile', hyperonym of both αἰγανή 'javelin' and ἰός 'arrow'. This results from an implicit reasoning which we have to unfold. The first step is the use of the principle of contextual permutation, widely applied by scholiasts: if a noun phrase A-B permutes with another noun phrase A-C, where A is the noun and B and C are the permuting epithets, that implies that B and C are synonyms.<sup>29</sup> Applied to our case, the reasoning is: "since βέλος ὠκύ (A-B) is a usual phrase in Homer, and since ἀγανός

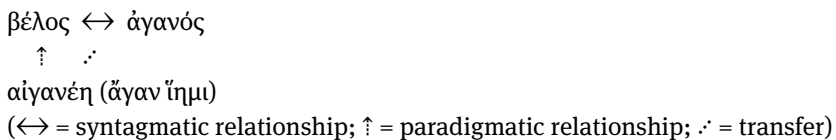
<sup>28</sup> The same line occurs in Ω 759 («Apollo» οἷσ' ἀγανοῖσι βέλεσσιν ἐπιχόμενος κατέπεφνε), but the D scholia have the correct explanation ἀγανοῖς βελέεσσι· πραέσι. Ἀνώδυνοι γὰρ οἱ ὀξεῖς θάνατοι (ZQU<sup>1</sup>G<sup>1</sup>) "ἀγανοῖς βελέεσσι· 'mild', because quick deaths are painless."

<sup>29</sup> Le Feuvre 2015, 37–42. An explicit case is found in a T scholion to I 124 (124a Erbse): πηγούς (ἀθλοφόρους)· μέλανας· τούτους γὰρ ἀρίστους φασὶν οἱ περὶ ἵππων γράψαντες (bT). ὁμοίως καὶ 'κύματι πηγῶ' (ε 388), εἶγε ἀλλαχοῦ φησι 'μέλαν τέ ἐ κῦμ' ἐκάλυψεν' (Ψ 693) (T). τινὲς δὲ μεγάλους, εὐτραφεῖς, ὑψαύχενας (bT) "πηγούς means 'black', and those who wrote about horses say those horses are the best ones. Similarly also for κύματι πηγῶ 'black wave' (ε 388), since he says elsewhere μέλαν τέ ἐ κῦμ' ἐκάλυψεν 'the black wave covered him' (Ψ 693). But others understand it as 'tall', 'strong', 'proud'." The T scholion justifies the interpretation 'black' for πηγός through the permutation with μέλας in the position of epithet of κύμα: κύματι πηγῶ = A-B, μέλαν [...] κύμα = A-C, therefore B (πηγός) and C (μέλας) are synonymous. T preserves here an element



can permute with ὠκύς as an epithet of βέλος (in ἀγανοῖσι βέλεσσιν, C-B), ἀγανός (C) and ὠκύς (B) must have the same meaning”—hence the translation ταχυτάτοις, with the modernised equivalent of ὠκύς. The principle of contextual permutation is sometimes explicit in our sources, but most of the time, as here, it is not: we have only the result (ταχυτάτοις), and the source noun phrase (βέλος ὠκύ) is not mentioned. The same holds true for τοῖς ὀξύτατοις in Schol. γ 280a2 (mss Es): it results from the application of this principle to the permutation of ἀγανοῖσι βέλεσσιν with the noun phrase βέλος ὀξύ, not βέλος ὠκύ. The principle of permutation can lead to different interpretations for one and the same adjective, here ‘swift’ (ταχυτάτοις) or ‘sharp’ (ὀξύτατοις), according to the different source phrases with which permutation is applied.

Now if ἀγανοῖσι βέλεσσιν means ‘swiftest arrows’, the meaning ‘swift’, which is not the regular meaning of ἀγανός, must be justified through etymology. This is the second step. It was easy to identify in ἀγανός the adverb ἄγαν, which provided a first element: that accounts for the superlative suffix in the translations ταχυτάτοις and ὀξύτατοις. The second element is indirectly provided by the word βέλος; paradigmatically related to αἰγανέη, as its hyperonym, and syntagmatically linked to ἀγανός, βέλος works as a node permitting an association of ideas. The reasoning is: “αἰγανέη is a kind of βέλος, it is swift and it is a compound of ἄγαν + νέομαι/ἵημι; ἀγανός is an epithet of βέλος, in ἀγανοῖσι βέλεσσιν it means ‘swift’ (ταχυτάτοις) and it is a compound of ἄγαν; therefore, since any βέλος is swift because it is ‘thrown violently’ or ‘goes violently’, ἀγανός must also be a compound of ἄγαν + νέομαι/ἵημι.” This could be schematised as follows:



The etymology of the noun αἰγανέη is thus transferred to the adjective ἀγανός although they do not co-occur, because the adjective co-occurs with the hyperonym of αἰγανέη, which shares with αἰγανέη a number of semantic features: those features, encapsulated in the etymology ἄγαν + ἵημι, are transferred, not to the hyperonym itself, but to its modifier, owing to the phonetic similarity of

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which has been cancelled from b: manuscripts coming from b have only the translation ‘black’, not the scholarly justification.

ἀγανός with αἰγανέη.<sup>30</sup> Needless to say this transfer of etymology is not explicit: the source, the etymology of αἰγανέη, is not mentioned either in Schol. ε 124a or in Schol. γ 280a1–3.<sup>31</sup> But this case underlines once more the necessity of comparing different scholia, even though they have no direct relationship, in order to take the full measure of the underground network which unites them, to restore cancelled elements in the different redactions and to understand how scholiasts worked.

A last point may be added: in in Schol. γ 280a3, the etymology ἄγαν + νέομαι for ἀγανός, introduced in the specific context of γ 280 and ε 124, is extended to other uses of ἀγανός with the general meaning ‘mild’: the explanation “because we all go to the one who is mild” is far-fetched, to say the least, but it is nothing more than an attempt to extend a contextual etymology to all the available contexts and to back it with a parallel etymological analysis for ἀγαθός. We can understand how it arose because Schol. γ 280a3 is fairly complete, but could we understand it if, for instance, the beginning ἡ ταχυτάτοις, ἄγαν ἰεμένοις, had been erased? Probably not. And there are many cases in which we are left with a redaction where too many elements are missing.

## 6 Conclusion

When reasoning is explicit enough, we have the elements, or at least some elements, which allow us to understand it and to judge whether it is correct or not. But most of the time, it is implicit in the texts we have, because explanations have been copied, abridged, reformulated, translated, omitted, and also because they often were elliptic from the start, being meant for scholars for whom it was not

<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, βέλος is often found as the object of ἵημι (e.g. A 382 (Apollo) ἦκε δ' ἐπ' Ἀργεῖοισι κακὸν βέλος, Δ 498 ὃ δ' οὐχ ἄλιον βέλος ἦκεν) or of ἐφίημι (e.g. A 51 βέλος ἐχευενκὲς ἐφίεις, E 174 ἀλλ' ἄγε τῷδ' ἔφες ἀνδρὶ βέλος, O 444 μάλα δ' ὦκα βέλεα Τρῶεσσιν ἐφίει): the syntagmatic association of βέλος with ἵημι in other contexts could, in the scholiast's mind, legitimate the etymology of ἀγανόισι βέλεσσιν as a compound ἄγαν + ἵημι.

<sup>31</sup> Notice that Schol. γ 280a2 in mss Es, because it kept τοῖς ἄγαν ἰεμένοις but erased ταχυτάτοις, becomes difficult to understand: the scholiast clearly did not understand that τοῖς ἄγαν ἰεμένοις was an etymological justification of ταχυτάτοις, depending on the latter, and he took it as an autonomous explanation, which it is not originally. The branch to which E and s belong chose the meaning ‘sharp’ (ὀξύτατοις), not ‘swift’ (ταχυτάτοις), so that it was logical to erase ταχυτάτοις, but by keeping only the etymological justification without the first part, the semantic interpretation, this redaction does not give a coherent picture. E still has the coherent chain in Schol. ε 124a ἡ τοῖς ταχυτάτοις παρὰ τὸ ἄγαν νεῖσθαι.

necessary to go into detail. The first thing we must do is to try to reconstruct what reasoning lies behind the attested material. Then we can ask whether it is valid or not. And this is imperative: taking the etymological explanations given in scholia and lexica without explicating the implicit elements means that one cannot understand the logic which underlies those explanations and thus that one is likely to repeat the same mistakes scholiasts did centuries ago, because their principles and methods were not ours. For a number of words, like αἰγανέη, the risk is limited, and no modern hellenist will follow the scholiasts' interpretations, but for other words, the risk is real. In particular, although it is clear today that scholiasts' etymologies are not worth anything most of the time—although they are extremely informative about the way Greek scholars dealt with their native language—, the translations or explications they give are very often taken as a basis for the understanding of rare Homeric words, even nowadays. And since those translations are repeated by lexicographers such as Hesychius, they acquire more weight from the fact that they are found also in a context which has no explicit link with Homeric scholarship. But, as we saw, even a bare translation like δολιχόσκιον· μακρὰν πορευόμενον is the product of a complex reasoning and is, not the translation of the Homeric word, but the translation of a scholarly interpretation of the Homeric word—and this is not an isolated case.<sup>32</sup> As a consequence, the distance between the D scholia (lexicographical scholia) and the A scholia appears less than usually assumed, since many D scholia transmit a redaction V condensing a redaction of type II or III found in the A scholia. Thus, the more elliptic an explanation is, the more we have to look around for clues as to how this explanation was produced, the more we have to identify between the lines the implicit elements in the transmitted text, and the more we have to be cautious before we trust it.

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<sup>32</sup> I discussed several cases in Le Feuvre 2015.

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# On Enantiosemy in Antiquity and its Modern Outcomes

## 1 Introduction

Having written the final note of his magnificent fourth Symphony (1910–1911), the Finnish composer Jan Sibelius (1865–1957) added a mysterious nickname to his music: *Lucus a non lucendo*, which, taken literally, means: ‘A grove (*lucus*) is so called from not being bright (*a non lucendo*)’. This famous Latin phrase has in fact a long history and may serve to illustrate a type of etymological practice that dates back to antiquity and remained very much in vogue down through the Middle Ages and modern times up until the nineteenth century, where, in spite of isolated attempts at revival, it was progressively condemned as absurd. This type of etymology, where something is named by a quality that it does not possess or by the opposite quality, has received different names—enantiosemy being the most recent—and its definition has varied substantially throughout the course of its history. It represents a little-known chapter in the history of etymology. The aim of this paper is to sketch the main lines of development of enantiosemy from ancient times to the present day and to explore its echoes in Greek and Latin literature.

## 2 Origins and terminology

The term ‘enantiosemy’ is a recent creation, based on the Greek elements ἐναντίος ‘contrary’ and σῆμα ‘meaning’. As far as I am aware, it was dubbed in 1819 by a German linguist, Johann Arnold Kanne (1773–1824), in his book *Prolusio Academica de Vocabulorum Enantiosemia, sive Observationum de Confusione in Linguis Babylonicis Specimen* (Nuremberg).<sup>1</sup> According to Kanne (1819, 3), enantiosemy refers to the *lucus a non lucendo* type of etymology based on the absence of a quality (“from non-X”), but what Kanne understands by this label is quite different: he applies this name to words that can be compared etymologically but

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘enantiosemy’ is also used a few decades later by Döderlein (1839, 19), who compares e.g. Lat. *pūrus* ‘pure’ and Gr. ψωρός ‘itchy, scabby, mangy’, Lat. *male* ‘bad’ and *melior* ‘better’, Lat. *uīta* ‘life’ and Gr. οἶτος ‘death, fate’.

display opposite meanings. Kanne (1819, 27–28) gives a number of examples from different languages, such as Hebrew, Arabic, Germanic and, last but not least, Greek and Latin: he tries, for example, to connect Gr. αἰσχρός ‘ugly, shameful’ with Gr. ἄσκεῖν ‘to dress out, to decorate’ or Lat. *prōbus* ‘good, honest’ with Lat. *prāuus* ‘bad, pervert’. This is something very different from what is denoted by the *lucus a non lucendo* type: the assumption made by Kanne is that two opposite words are cognate and go back to the same source, which is supposed to have been semantically ambivalent, whereas the *lucus a non lucendo* type is only an etymological explanation based on the absence of a quality, without further speculation on the background of this explanation. The difference is that the *lucus a non lucendo* type implies that A+ goes back to A-, whereas Kanne’s enantiosemy implies that A+ and A- go back to A±, which is a more complex reconstruction. In a somewhat different way, Knox (1989, 161) proposed introducing a distinction between *antiphrasis*, understood as the comparison of two words, and *enantiosemy* in reference to the semantic ambivalence of a single word:

In the former the two opposite meanings or connotations (e.g., ‘beautiful’ and ‘war’) belong to two different words, the etymon (*bellus*) and its supposed derivative (*bellum*), whereas in the latter the opposite meanings or connotations (e.g., ‘fat’, ‘thin’) belong to the same word (*obesus*).

In what follows, I will use the terms ‘enantiosemy’, ‘enantiosemic’ as cover symbols, without prejudice to their substance, and will reserve the terms ‘antiphrasis’, ‘antiphrastic’ for the field of rhetoric. The reasons for this choice will appear clearly in the course of the discussion.

In antiquity, several names were used to refer to the *lucus a non lucendo* type. The term ἐναντιώσις ‘contradiction’ was popular among the Stoic philosophers, who are considered the inventors of this type of etymology. Etymology by citing the contrary was one of the main etymological principles recognized by the Stoics. This was explicitly stated in the treatise *De Dialectica*, commonly attributed to Augustine (ca 384 CE). The sixth chapter of this book, which remained unfinished, deals with the Stoic theory of etymology.<sup>2</sup> It begins with the well-known claim that, according to the Stoics, every single word may receive an etymology:

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<sup>2</sup> On the Stoic theory of etymology see Müller 1910, 42–66 (especially p. 58 on the etymology by the contrary).

- (1) Augustine, *De Dialectica* VI: *Stoici autumant, quos Cicero in hac re ut Cicero inridet, nullum esse verbum, cuius non certa explicari origo possit.*

The Stoics affirm, whom Cicero ridicules in this matter (as Cicero so well could), that there is no word whose origin cannot be explained with certainty.

A little later in the text, Augustine reviews the different types of etymologies distinguished by the Stoics:<sup>3</sup>

- (2) Augustine, *De Dialectica* VI: *Aut similitudine rerum et sonorum aut similitudine rerum ipsarum aut uicinitate aut contrario contineri uidebis originem uerbi.*

The origin of a word can be contained either in the similitude of things and sounds or in the similitude of things themselves, or in the vicinity, or in the contrary.

The first type (*similitudo rerum et sonorum* ‘similitude of things and sounds’) corresponds to what we call ‘onomatopoeia’; the examples given by Augustine include Lat. *aeris tinnitum* ‘clinking of brass’, *equorum hinnitum* ‘whinny of horses’, *ouium balatum* ‘bleating of sheeps’, *tubarum clangorem* ‘blare of trumpets’, *stridorem catenarum* ‘grinding of chains’. The second type (*similitudo rerum ipsarum* ‘similitude of things themselves’) is illustrated by the etymological link between Lat. *crux* ‘cross’ and *crura* ‘limbs’, on the assumption that limbs ‘of all members are most similar to the wood of the cross in length and sturdiness’ (*longitudine atque duritie inter membra cetera sint ligno crucis similiora*). The third type (*uicinitas* ‘vicinity’ or *abusio* ‘misuse’) refers to etymological motivations based on semantic extensions; the classic example is Lat. *piscina* ‘pool’ used even if there is no fish (*piscis*) inside. Finally, the fourth type (*contrarium* ‘contrary’) is precisely the type I am talking about:

- (3) Augustine, *De Dialectica*, VI: *Hinc facta progressio usque ad contrarium. Nam ‘lucus’ eo dictus putatur quod minime luceat et ‘bellum’ quod res bella non sit et ‘foederis’ nomen quod res foeda non sit.*

From these we go on to contraries. The ‘grove’ [*lucus*] is said to take its name from the fact that there is little light there [*minime luceat*], and the ‘war’ [*bellum*], because it is not a ‘pretty’ [*bella*] thing, and the name of the ‘treaty’ [*foedus*], because it is not an ‘ugly’ [*foeda*] thing.

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3 Cf. Lobeck 1840, 293; Lersch 1841, 50.

The most striking feature of Augustine's presentation is that the Stoics are attributed a theory which Augustine illustrates with Latin examples. The different etymologies are named in Latin, and we do not learn from Augustine what their Greek names could have been. There is no doubt, however, that we have here a faithful echo of the Stoic theory of etymology, since there is a striking similarity between the system described by Augustine and the Stoic theory of perception, explicitly mentioned by Diogenes Laertius in the seventh book of his *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* (3rd c. CE):

- (4) Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, VII, 52: Τῶν γὰρ νοουμένων τὰ μὲν κατὰ περίπτωσιν ἐνοήθη, τὰ δὲ καθ' ὁμοιότητα, τὰ δὲ κατ' ἀναλογίαν, <τὰ δὲ κατὰ μετάθεσιν,> τὰ δὲ κατὰ σύνθεσιν, τὰ δὲ κατ' ἐναντίωσιν.

General notions, indeed, are gained in the following ways: some by direct contact [περίπτωσις], some by resemblance [ὁμοιότης], some by analogy [ἀναλογία], <some by transposition [μετάθεσις]>, some by composition [σύνθεσις], and some by contrariety [ἐναντίωσις]. (transl. R.D. Hicks 1925)

These distinctions refer to the different ways reality can be perceived. Diogenes Laertius illustrates them in the following paragraph (VII.53) by examples that are strongly reminiscent of Augustine's subtypes of etymologies; their number is reduced to four. A direct contact (περίπτωσις 'convergence'), he says, is provided by the immediate perception of 'sensible things' (αἰσθητά), for instance when we see Socrates face to face. Resemblance (ὁμοιότης) refers to the perception of a reality through a medium, for instance when we know Socrates from his bust. Analogy (ἀναλογία) is viewed as a transposition from the known to the unknown: for example, the giants Tityos or the Cyclops are imagined on the model of human beings, but with a bigger size. Finally, contradiction (ἐναντίωσις) is presented as the absence of a reality: for example, death is seen as the privation of life. The concordance between perception and etymology is not an accident, since the Stoics considered the nature of realities to be reflected by the nature of their name. Taking this parallelism seriously, it can be reasonably argued that a comparison between Augustine and Diogenes Laertius reveals the Stoic names for the different types of etymologies. This is suggested by the following table, in which I have tried to underscore the similarities between the two levels of analysis:



**Tab. 1:** Etymology and perception in Augustine and Diogenes Laertius.

Latin (Augustine)	Examples	Greek (Diogenes Laertius)
<i>similitudo rerum et sonorum</i>	the word <i>tinnitum</i> ‘clinking of brass’ provides a direct perception of the sound	the eyes provide a direct perception of Socrates περίπτωσης
<i>similitudo rerum ip-sarum</i>	<i>crura</i> ‘limbs’ resembling a <i>crux</i> ‘cross’	a bust resembling Socrates ὁμοιότης
<i>uicinitas/abusio</i>	<i>piscina</i> ‘pool’ re-simulating a sea, but without <i>piscis</i> ‘fish’	the giants Tityos or the Cyclops resem- bling human be- ings, but bigger ἀναλογία/κατάχρησις
<i>contrarium</i>	<i>lucus</i> ‘grove’ viewed as the contrary of <i>luceo</i> ‘to be bright’	death viewed as the contrary of life ἐναντίωσις

“Etymology by the contrary” thus appears to be much more than just a harmless wordplay. It is part of a comprehensive philosophical system and takes place on a graduated scale ranging from complete identity to complete alterity. It is not certain, however, that this kind of etymology is based on the claim that words are fundamentally ambivalent, able to convey opposite meanings. We do not have evidence that this was explicitly defined in that way by the Stoics. This view could be in keeping with the principle of polysemy,<sup>4</sup> which, according to Aulus Gellius (*Attic Nights*, 2nd c. CE), was first formulated by the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus (ca 279–ca 206 BCE):<sup>5</sup>

- (5) Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* XI.12: *Chrysippus ait omne uerbum ambiguum natura esse, quoniam ex eodem duo uel plura accipi possint.*

Chrysippus says that every word is ambiguous by nature, since the same word can have two or more meanings.

<sup>4</sup> We do not know how polysemy was named in the Stoic theory of language, but ἀμφιβολία is certainly the most plausible candidate (see Diog. Laert. VII.62: ἀμφιβολία δέ ἐστι λέξις δύο ἢ καὶ πλείονα πράγματα σημαίνουσα).

<sup>5</sup> On ambiguity in the Stoic philosophy see also Augustine (*De Dialectica* VIII).

But polysemy is not necessarily the same thing as ambivalence, and we cannot be sure that the Stoics considered etymology by the contrary to reflect the ability of primitive words to convey opposite semantic values.

The diffusion of etymology by the contrary in the Greek grammatical tradition seems to have been relatively limited. It is well known that the famous Alexandrian grammarian Aristarchus (ca 220–ca 143 BCE) was not very fond of etymology. In spite of this, different Byzantine sources, particularly the *Suda* and Photius (9th century CE), attribute to Aristarchus one instance of ‘antiphrasis’:

- (6) *Suda*, T 201; Photius, Λέξεων συναγωγή 92: Ταχυβάμονας ὄρκους· Ἀρίσταρχος κατὰ ἀντίφρασιν ἀκούει· ἀντὶ τοῦ βραδεῖς.

The ‘swift-walking oaths’ [ταχυβάμονας]: Aristarchus understands it by antiphrasis [ἀντίφρασις], instead of ‘slow’ [βραδεῖς].

This quotation, however, is given without context. We do not know precisely what the adjective ταχυβάμων ‘swift-walking’ refers to,<sup>6</sup> nor do we know whether ‘antiphrasis’ is here contextual or linguistic. This example seems to suggest that the term ἀντίφρασις ‘antiphrasis’ was used in the Alexandrian school instead of ἐναντίωσις ‘contradiction’ with probably the same meaning; there was no semantic difference between the two terms, at least when they were used to refer to etymology by the contrary. The choice of ἀντίφρασις ‘antiphrasis’, however, is not insignificant: it probably reveals an attempt at integrating etymology by the contrary into the field of rhetoric, where it can be related to ‘irony’ (εἰρωνεία) on the one hand and to ‘euphemism’ (εὐφημισμός) on the other. The term ἀντίφρασις had a meaning in Greek antiquity that was more than simply linguistic, as suggested by Pseudo-Plutarch’s definition:

- (7) Plutarch, *Life of Homer* II.25.493: “Ἐστὶ καὶ ἡ ἀντίφρασις, λέξις τὸ ἐναντίον <διὰ τοῦ ἐναντίου> ἢ τοῦ παρακειμένου σημαίνουσα, ὡς ἐν τούτῳ· οὐδ’ ἄρα τῷ γε ἰδὼν γήθησεν Ἀχιλλεύς· βούλεται γὰρ εἰπεῖν τὸ ἐναντίον, ὅτι ἰδὼν αὐτοὺς ἔλυπτήθη.

There is also *antiphrasis*: an expression signifying the contrary by the contrary of what exists as in this sentence: ‘Achilles, seeing them, did not rejoice’ (A 330). It means the contrary, namely that he was displeased to see them.

This rhetorical understanding of the notion is reflected, in virtually identical terms, in the definition of ‘antiphrasis’ given a little earlier by the Greek grammarian Tryphon (ca 60–0 BCE):

<sup>6</sup> The word also occurs once in Aristotle’s *Physiognomonica* (813a7).

- (8) Tryphon, *Περὶ τροπῶν* (ed. Walz, VIII.755 = ed. J.-F. Boissonade, *Anecdota graeca*, III.279):  
Ἡ ἀντίφρασις ἐστὶ λέξις τὸ ἐναντίον διὰ τοῦ ἐναντίου σημαίνουσα.

Antiphrasis is a figure of style signifying the contrary by the contrary.

Tryphon distinguishes two subtypes of antiphrasis, euphemism (εὐφημισμός) and enantiosis (ἐναντίωσις), the latter involving the use of a negation. The Stoic denomination ‘enantiosis’ (ἐναντίωσις) is re-used as a subdivision of the more general concept of ‘antiphrasis’ (ἀντίφρασις) beside ‘euphemism’ (εὐφημισμός):

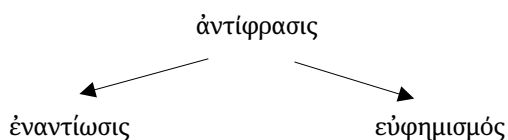


Fig. 2: The subtypes of antiphrasis according to Tryphon.

Apart from this isolated use of the Stoic term ἐναντίωσις, the Alexandrian grammarians have usually preferred to use ἀντίφρασις as a cover symbol, both for rhetorical effects and for lexical processes, probably including some forms of etymology by the contrary.

In the Greek scholia and commentaries, the term ἀντίφρασις ‘antiphrasis’ is often used, sometimes in competition with other terms (such as ἀντίθεσις ‘antithesis’) in the same meaning, and there is some evidence to substantiate the claim that it could be understood in the narrow sense of enantiosemy or etymology by the contrary.<sup>7</sup> Some instances are too short to be fully exploitable:

- (9) Schol. ε 467d2 Pontani: Στίβη· ἢ πάχνη κατὰ ἀντίφρασιν.

‘Freezing cold’: ‘frost’ by antiphrasis.

In many others, one gets the impression that ἀντίφρασις simply refers to the use of one word instead of another:

- (10) Scholion ad Soph. *Trach.* 890: Τὸ ματαία κατὰ ἀντίφρασιν ἀντὶ τοῦ μελέα.

He uses ματαία ‘vain, empty, idle’ by antiphrasis instead of μελέα ‘unhappy, miserable’.

<sup>7</sup> Many examples are given by Lobeck 1840.

- (11) A Schol. Δ 513: Ἀντιφράζει τὸν χόλον τῇ μῆνιδι.

He uses χόλος ‘gall, bile’ by antiphrasis instead of μῆνις ‘wrath’.

- (12) A Schol. Ξ 485: Ἀντιπέφρακε τὸν γνωτὸν τῷ κασίγνητῳ.

He uses γνωτός ‘relative’ by antiphrasis instead of κασίγνητος ‘brother’.

Various lexicographical works exhibit a handful of instances more closely identifiable as enantiosemic *scripto sensu*.<sup>8</sup> In two fragments transmitted by the *Etymologicum Magnum*, the Greek grammarians Philoxenus (1st c. BCE) and Tryphon (ca 60–0 BCE) are said to have explained the Greek adverb πλὴν ‘apart from, outside of’ as cognate with πλησίον ‘near’, which means the opposite, and similarly the Greek adjective ἐτός ‘true’ as cognate with ἐτώσιος ‘vain, useless’, which also means the opposite:

- (13) Tryphon, *Fragmenta* 21.8.2 (ed. von Velsen 1853): Φιλόξενος καὶ Τρύφων φασίν, ὥσπερ παρὰ τὸ πλησίον τὸ ἐγγὺς γίνεται κατὰ ἀντίφρασιν τὸ πλὴν ἐπίρρημα, σημαῖνον τὸ χωρὶς, οὕτως καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἐτός, ὃ σημαίνει τὸν ἀληθῆ, γίνεται κατὰ ἀντίφρασιν ἐτώσιος ὁ μάταιος.

Philoxenus and Tryphon say that, in the same way as from πλησίον ‘near’ by antiphrasis derives the adverb πλὴν, meaning ‘separately, apart’, from ἐτός, which means ‘true’, derives by antiphrasis ἐτώσιος ‘vain, useless’. (CLF)

- (14) Philoxenus, *Fragmenta* 491: Ἐτώσιον· ... ὁ δὲ Φιλόξενος καὶ Τρύφων φασίν, ὅτι ὥσπερ παρὰ τὸ πλησίον τὸ σημαῖνον τὸ ἐγγὺς γίνεται κατὰ ἀντίφρασιν τὸ πλὴν ἐπίρρημα τὸ σημαῖνον τὸ χωρὶς, οἷον πλὴν Ἀπολλωνίου, πλὴν Διδύμου, οὕτως καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἐτός ὀνόματος, ὃ σημαίνει τὸν ἀληθῆ, γέγονε ἐτώσιον κατὰ ἀντίφρασιν· σημαίνει δὲ τὸ μάταιον.

Ἐτώσιον ‘vain, useless’: Philoxenus and Tryphon say that, in the same way as from πλησίον meaning ‘near’ by antiphrasis derives the adverb πλὴν meaning ‘apart, separately’, e.g. πλὴν Ἀπολλωνίου ‘without Apollonius’, πλὴν Διδύμου ‘without Didymus’, from ἐτός, which means ‘true’, derives by antiphrasis ἐτώσιον, which means ‘vain, useless’. (CLF)

We owe to the same Philoxenus (1st c. BCE) another enantiosemic etymology:

- (15) Philoxenus, *Fragmenta* 547: μαυροῦσι· κατὰ ἀντίφρασιν ἀπὸ τοῦ μαίρω δηλοῦντος τὸ λάμπω.

<sup>8</sup> I owe these examples to Claire Le Feuvre (Paris), who has collected some of them for the website Etymgram (<http://appsweb-cepam.unice.fr/etygram>) and has provided me (by email dated 19 August 2019) with further examples, most of them completely new. They are identified in my text by the acronym CLF (= Claire Le Feuvre). I thank her sincerely for having put to my disposal this extremely valuable material.

μαυροῦσι (Hes., *Op.* 325) ‘they darken, make obscure’: by antiphrasis from \*μαίρω meaning ‘to shine’. (CLF; \*μαίρω, a ghost-word for μαρμαίρω ‘to flash, to sparkle, to gleam’)

A few centuries later, the enantiosemic etymology of the adverb πλὴν ‘apart from, outside of’ is repeated by the Greek grammarian Orion of Thebes (5th century CE):

- (16) Orion of Thebes, *Etymologicum*, pi p. 138: Πλὴν· ἐπίρρημα κατ’ ἀντίφρασιν, ἀπὸ τοῦ πλησιάζω.

Πλὴν ‘apart from’: adverb by antiphrasis, from πλησιάζω ‘to bring near’. (CLF)

The same Orion is known to have left other enantiosemic explanations of some Greek words, such as the following:

- (17) Orion of Thebes, *Etymologicum*, delta p. 46: Δραθεῖν· τὸ κοιμᾶσθαι. Δρῆθω, β’ ἀόριστον ἔδραθον, ἀπὸ τοῦ ἔδαρθον. Ἐστὶ δὲ κατ’ ἀντίφρασιν. Δρῶ γὰρ τὸ ἐνεργῶ, οὐ παράγωγον δρῆθω. Οἱ γὰρ κοιμώμενοι οὐδὲν ἐνεργοῦσι.

Δραθεῖν ‘to sleep’: there is a verb δρῆθω, the second aorist of which is ἔδραθον, from ἔδαρθον. It is by opposition: δρῶ means ‘to be active’ and its derivative is δρῆθω. Because those who sleep are not active at all. (example and translation by CLF)

These examples of true enantiosemy are to be distinguished from etymologies involving a negative morpheme, as in (18–20):

- (18) Plutarch, *Quaestiones Convivales* 723b, ed. C. Hubert (1938): φάσκοντες αὐτὴν τε τὴν ‘νίκην’ παρὰ τὸ μὴ εἶκον ὠνομάσθαι.

saying that the word νίκη ‘victory’ itself is named from not giving in (CLF; νίκη as \*ν- + εἶκω)

- (19) Orion of Thebes, *Etymologicum*, mu p. 98: Μῖσος· παρὰ τὸ μὴ ἴσον εἶναι.

Μῖσος ‘hate’: from being not equal (CLF; μῖσος < μὴ ἴσος)

- (20) Orion of Thebes, *Etymologicum*, mu p. 99: Μᾶσσον· τὸ μέγα καὶ μακρόν. παρὰ τὸ μὴ ἄσσον εἶναι τινος, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐγγύς.

Μᾶσσον ‘longer, bigger’: the big and long, from not being close to something, i.e. nearby (CLF; μᾶσσον < μὴ ἄσσον)

and probably (21):

- (21) Orion of Thebes, *Etymologicum*, mu p. 102: Μήνη· ἡ σελήνη. Ἀπὸ τοῦ μὴ μένειν ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ ποτὲ μὲν μειοῦσθαι, ποτὲ δὲ αὐξεσθαι.

Μήνη the ‘moon’: is called thus from the fact that it does not stay [μὴ μένειν] in the same condition, but now it diminishes, now it grows. (example and translation by CLF)

As recognized by Claire Le Feuvre, there is no real enantiosemic explanation in ex. 18–20, but a complex causal etymology based on negative (pseudo-)compounds supposed to include the negative morpheme. The difference is that an enantiosemic etymology would introduce into the etymological analysis a negation that would not be overtly present in the word to be explained. In this respect, the etymology of μήνη ‘moon’ (ex. 21) is ambiguous: it seems to be based on a negative compound (μήνη < μὴ μένειν), but could also be purely enantiosemic (μήνη < not μένειν).

Later sources from the Byzantine period provide us with a few more enantiosemic etymologies. One of the most famous ones is the name of Ποσειδῶν ‘Poseidon’ derived in the *Etymologicum Magnum* (12th century CE) from πόσει ἐνδεῖν ‘to lack drink’, but other enantiosemic explanations are attested in different Byzantine sources:

- (22) *Epimerismi Homerici* (9th century CE) s.u. ad *Il.* 1.219: Κώπη· τῇ λαβῇ τοῦ ξίφους, παρὰ τὸ μὴ κόπτειν τὴν χεῖρα. Κόπτω οὖν κώπη, τῆς θέσει μακρᾶς γενομένης φύσει, ὡς ἀπὸ τοῦ κολλῶ κωλύω.

Κώπη ‘handle’: the handle of the sword, from the fact that it does not ‘cut’ [κόπτειν] the hand. From κόπτω ‘cut’ one derives κώπη ‘handle’, the syllable which is long by position becoming long by nature, as from κολλῶ ‘to stick to’ one derives κωλύω ‘to impede’. (example and translation by CLF)

- (23) Choeroboscus, *Epimerismi in Psalmos* 28 (9th century CE): Χήρα δὲ, ἡ γυνή, διὰ τοῦ Ἡ γράφεται, ὅτι ἀπὸ τοῦ χαρὰ γέγονε κατὰ ἀντίφρασιν, ἡ μὴ χαίρουσα.

Χήρα ‘widow’, the woman, is spelled through Ἡ, because it comes from χαρὰ ‘joy’ by antiphrasis, the one who does not rejoice. (example and translation by CLF)

- (24) *Etymologicum Magnum*, Kallierges p. 265 (12th century CE): Δημός· Σημαίνει δύο· ὀξύτωνος, τὸ λίπος· παρὰ τὸ δαίω, τὸ καίω, ὁ δεύτερος ἀόριστος, ἔδασον· δαμός καὶ δημός, τὸ καϊόμενον ἐν ταῖς θυσίαις· ἢ δι’ οὗ καίονται αἱ θυσίαι· καυστικὸν γὰρ τὸ λίπος [...] Ἡ παρὰ τὸ δέω, τὸ δεσμῶ, δεμός καὶ δημός, κατὰ ἀντίφρασιν, τὸ εὐδιάλυτον.

Δημός has two meanings. Oxytone, it means ‘fat’; it comes from δαίω which means ‘to burn’ [καίω], the second aorist is ἔδασον; \*δαμός and \*δημός, that which is burnt in sacrifices, or through which the sacrifices are burning, because fat burns well [...] Or from δέω ‘to bind’, \*δεμός and \*δημός, through antiphrasis, that which melts easily. (example and translation by CLF)

In all the instances given above, however, we cannot determine whether these etymologies go back to Greek sources directly and reflect an ancient Greek tradition or were influenced by a more common Latin practice applied to Greek material.

To sum up, there is evidence for a limited use of what we call enantiosemy or etymology by the contrary in Ancient Greece. This usage must go back to the Stoics and can hardly be from a more ancient date. It is also possible that the Alexandrian school had a certain understanding of enantiosemy, but the term ἀντίφρασις ‘antiphrasis’, which seems to have been occasionally used in this sense, had far broader meanings. The question raised by these terminological considerations is whether enantiosemy was really a common etymological practice in Ancient Greece. When we find it in late lexicographical works of the Roman or Byzantine periods, we may wonder whether this reflects a genuine practice in Greece, going back to ancient times, or simply derives from a Latin grammatical tradition applied to Greek words.

### 3 Enantiosemy in Greek literature

Looking back at potential early instances of enantiosemy in Ancient Greek literature, it is necessary to distinguish it clearly from other types of etymologies that may bear certain similarities. First of all, it is worthwhile remembering that the most common practice of etymology in Ancient Greece is causal, in the sense that the etymological explanation is supposed to assign a cause to the name of something. A prime example among many others is the explanation of the name of Pandora by Hesiod:

(25) Hesiod, *Works and Days* 80–82

...ὀνόμηνε δὲ τήνδε γυναῖκα  
Πανδώραν, ὅτι πάντες Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες  
δῶρον ἐδώρησαν, πῆμ' ἀνδράσιν ἀλφειστῆσιν.

And he called this woman ‘Pandora’ [Πανδώρα], because all [πάντες] the inhabitants of Olympus gave a gift [δῶρον], a plague to men who eat bread.

The name of Pandora receives a causal explanation, formalized by the conjunction ὅτι ‘because’. This type of etymology is the most frequently used in Ancient Greece and elsewhere and corresponds to the most intuitive practice of etymology. Other types of etymologies, however, can be built on a different basis. For the sake of clarity, one can distinguish the following subtypes:

- Causal etymology: *A because A*
- Paradoxical etymology: *A because -A* (the *lucus a non lucendo* type)
- Contradictory etymology: *A although -A*
- Ambivalent etymology:  $A = -A < A \pm$  (Kanne's enantiosemy)

This classification is only indicative. It does not correspond to any conscious classification by the Greek philological tradition. It has the virtue of making clear elementary distinctions that could easily escape notice if we were to be misled by enantiosemy formulated in overly broad terms. In what follows, we will review some instances of Greek etymologies that could be superficially likened to enantiosemy, but which, in reality, turn out to be of a very different nature.

### 3.1 Εὐμενίδες

One of the most famous examples of enantiosemy dating back to Ancient Greece is one in which the euphemistic function (avoidance of words considered rude or unspeakable) is crucial. Beginning with Aeschylus, the Greek deities of vengeance, the Erinyes, were sometimes called Εὐμενίδες ‘the good-spirited, or the kindly ones’ (from εὐμενής ‘well-disposed, kindly’), which suggests an enantiosemic denomination based on a taboo-like prohibition. The reluctance to pronounce the name of the Eumenides is well attested in Greek, as shown by this passage in Euripides’ *Orestes*:

(26) Euripides, *Orestes* (37–38)

...ὀνομάζειν γὰρ αἰδοῦμαι θεὰς  
εὐμενίδας, αἱ τὸνδ' ἐξαμιλλῶνται φόβῳ.

I am ashamed to call Eumenides [Εὐμενίδας] the goddesses who are pursuing me with their terror.

This reluctance is obviously based on the potential contradiction between the name of the Eumenides and the reality of their behavior. The name of the Eumenides could give rise to two types of enantiosemic etymologies, either a paradoxical etymology, corresponding to the *lucus a non lucendo* type: ‘the Eumenides [Εὐμενίδες] are so called because they are not good-spirited [εὐμενής]’, or to a contradictory etymology, pointing to the contradiction itself without ascribing it any causal value: ‘the Eumenides [Εὐμενίδες] are so called though they are not good-spirited [εὐμενής]’. A passage in Sophocles’ *Oedipus at Colonus* shows a different approach to their name:



(27) Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus* (486–487)

Ὡς σφας καλοῦμεν Εὐμενίδας, ἐξ εὐμενῶν  
στέρνων δέχεσθαι τὸν ἰκέτην σωτήριον.

We call them Eumenides [Εὐμενίδας], so that with well-wishing [εὐμενῶν] power they may receive the suppliant as his saviors.

Strikingly enough, Sophocles, connecting the Εὐμενίδες with the adjective εὐμενής ‘well-disposed, kindly’, tries to explain their name by the hope that they will acquire this quality, which is not exactly the same as saying that they actually have it (causal explanation) or do not have it (paradoxical or contradictory explanation). For this etymology one could suggest the name ‘performative etymology’, in that its mention is supposed to have an effect on the referent itself, in this case the change of a contradictory etymology (the Eumenides are so called though they are not good-spirited) into a causal etymology (the Eumenides are so called because they are good-spirited). Sophocles thus avoids the potential contradiction in the name of the Εὐμενίδες; this suggests that enantiosemy, even when motivated by euphemism, was seen as unnatural at the time of Sophocles.

### 3.2 Εὔξεινος Πόντος

Another well-known example of potential enantiosemy is the antique name of the Black Sea, the ‘Euxine Sea’ (Gr. Εὔξεινος Πόντος), presented as ‘hospitable’ (εὔξεινος), though it is a wild country, inhabited by cruel tribes. This euphemistic denomination is attested as early as Pindar and Herodotus, but its form has varied through the course of its history. The first mention of the Black Sea is found in Pindar’s *Nemean* IV.80: ἐν δ’ Εὐξείνῳ πελάγει ‘in the Pontic Sea’, but the philological tradition fluctuates between Εὐξείνῳ ‘hospitable’ and Ἄξεινῳ ‘inhospitable’. The latter denotes a causal etymology: ‘the Axine Sea [Ἄξεινος Πόντος] is so called because it is inhospitable [ἄξεινος]’, whereas the former is more complex and denotes at least a contradictory etymology: ‘the Euxine Sea [Εὔξεινος Πόντος] is so called though it is not hospitable [εὔξεινος]’, or potentially a paradoxical etymology: ‘the Euxine Sea [Εὔξεινος Πόντος] is so called because it is not hospitable [εὔξεινος]’. In another passage, Pindar uses ἄξεινος ‘inhospitable’ (*Pythian* IV.203: ἐπ’ Ἀξείνου στόμα ‘to the mouth of the Inhospitable Sea’). The names Ἄξεινος Πόντος and Εὔξεινος Πόντος are in competition in Greek tragedy, partly due to fluctuations in the philological tradition: compare e.g. Euripides’ *Iphigenia in Tauris* 125 (πόντου...ἄξεινου/εὐξείνου), but *Iphigenia in Tauris* 218 (ἄξεινου πόντου) and *Andromache* 1262 (εὐξένου πόρου), *Iphigenia in Tauris* 438 (εὔξεινον...πόντον). Herodotus and Thucydides seem to have used exclusively

εὐξεινος, cf. Herodotus' *Histories* I.6.1 (ἐς τὸν Εὐξείνιον καλεόμενον πόντον), I.110 (τοῦ Πόντου τοῦ Εὐξείνου) and Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War* II.96.1 (ἐς τὸν Εὐξείνιον τε πόντον... πρὸς θάλασσαν μᾶλλον τὴν τοῦ Εὐξείνου πόντου), II.97.1 (ἐς τὸν Εὐξείνιον πόντον) and II.97.5 (τοῦ Εὐξείνου πόντου). This suggests that the ancient name was Ἄξεινος Πόντος and that it was gradually replaced by Εὐξεινος Πόντος. Already in antiquity the replacement of ἄξεινος by εὐξεινος was known, and the Latin poet Ovid makes direct reference to it in a passage of his *Tristia*:

(28) Ovid, *Tristia* (IV.4.56)

*Frigida me cohibent Euxini litora Ponti:  
dictus ab antiquis Axenus ille fuit.*

The cold shores of the Euxine Sea keep me; it was called by the ancients Axine.

There is thus evidence for the priority of Ἄξεινος Πόντος. This name itself apparently derives from a causal etymology in Greek (the Axine sea is so called because it is inhospitable), but it could well be secondary considering the Iranian origin it has usually received in the literature. It was shown, for example, by Rüdiger Schmitt (1996) that the name of the Black Sea is based on an Iranian adjective \**axšaēna-* 'black, dark-colored, not bright', attested in Avestan (e.g. *arəšō axšaēnō* 'a black bear', *gauuqm axšaēnqm* 'black cows') and Old Persian (*kāsaka: hya: axšaina* 'the turquoise stone', DSf 39). Morphologically, \**a-xšaēna-* is a negative compound of a stem \**xšaē-na-* 'bright', parallel to Avestan *xšaē-ta-* 'shining'. The original designation \**axšaēna-* 'the black, dark-colored sea' was translated in the Turkish name of the 'Black Sea' as *Karadeniz* (< Turkish *kara* 'black' and *deniz* 'sea'), from which the major designations of the Black Sea in European languages derive by semantic calque (e.g. Romanian *Marea Neagră*, Russian Чёрное море, Modern Greek Μαύρη Θάλασσα, English *Black Sea*, French *Mer Noire*). The Iranian name of the Black Sea \**axšaēna-* was folk-etymologically reinterpreted by Ionian Greeks as ἄξεινος 'inhospitable', giving rise to an internal Greek etymology which could appear perfectly plausible in terms of causality. The process that led to the inversion of ἄξεινος into εὐξεινος is a recent development that took place within Greek history.

Now, the question is which type of etymology the name of the Black Sea could receive once it was reinterpreted as ἄξεινος and, even more crucially, once it was rebuilt as εὐξεινος in Greek. There is little if any indication as to how the name was analyzed by the Greeks. Occasionally, one finds in Greek literature puns or wordplays that could give us clues about the way it was seen by Greek authors,

but the difficulty is that puns cannot be unreservedly equated with fully elaborated etymological explanations. A first example is found in a passage of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*:

(29) Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris* (218)

Νῦν δ' ἄξεινους πόντου ξεῖνα  
δυσχόρτους οἴκους ναίω.

But now, as a stranger, I am living in the infertile country of the Axine Sea.

The name of the Black Sea ἄξεινος πόντος contrasts with the adjective ξεῖνα 'stranger', referring to Iphigenia, which points to a contradiction in the dramatic situation Iphigenia is going through: although a stranger, she has to live in a place inhospitable to strangers. The contrast expressed by the co-occurrence of ἄξεινους and ξεῖνα in the same line does not constitute a fully-fledged etymology; it is not an enantiosemic etymology. On the contrary, it brings to light the causal link hidden behind the name ἄξεινος πόντος (the Axine Sea is so called because it is inhospitable): the contradiction is not in the name of the Black Sea itself, which receives a perfectly regular causal etymology, but in Iphigenia's figure, whose personal situation conflicts with this etymology.

Another passage in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris* may reveal a similar contradiction:

(30) Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris* (340–342)

Χορός. θαυμάστ' ἔλεξας τὸν μανένθ', ὅστις ποτὲ  
Ἕλληνας ἐκ γῆς πόντον ἦλθεν ἄξενον.  
Ἰφιγένεια. εἶεν· σὺ μὲν κόμιζε τοὺς ξένους μολῶν.

*Choir.* You have said amazing things about this mad man, whoever he is, who has come from Greece to this inhospitable sea.

*Iphigenia.* Very well. You bring the strangers here.

Here again, the name of the Black Sea (πόντον...ἄξενον) contrasts with the name of the strangers (ξένους): the situation takes place on the shores of a sea inhospitable to strangers, and yet Iphigenia orders the choir to bring strangers to that place. The wordplay is emphasized by the fact that Euripides replaces the traditional Ionian form ἄξεινος by its Attic equivalent ἄξενος, with the effect that the name of the Black Sea is remotivated. This does not mean, however, that the etymology of the Black Sea contains an internal contradiction: the contradiction does not lie in the Black Sea, whose name conveys a regular causal link with one of the properties of its referent, but in the tragic situation, introducing strangers into a place that is named for its inhospitability to strangers.

Apart from these two passages, which hint at the etymology of the name Ἰαεὶνος Πόντος, there is no clear allusion to any kind of enantiosemy in the case of Εὐξεινος Πόντος, and we do not know how it was interpreted by Greek authors. Only the Latin poet Ovid, several centuries later, provides us with an explicit understanding of Εὐξεινος Πόντος:

- (31) Ovid, *Tristia* (III.13.27–28)

*Pontus, /Euxinus falso nomine dictus.*

Pontus, falsely called Euxinus.

- (32) Ovid, *Tristia* (V.10.13)

*quem tenet Euxini mendax cognomine littus*

I, whom the shore of the Euxine, that misnomer, holds.

The qualification of the Euxine as ‘falsely named’, ‘misnomer’, suggests a contradictory etymology: ‘the Euxine Sea [Εὐξεινος Πόντος] is so called though it is not hospitable [εὐξεινος]’. There is no evidence that this was precisely the way the Greeks themselves perceived the etymology of the Euxine Sea. No trace of any paradoxical etymology can be found, even in Ovid, who is known to have been fond of this type of etymology. In this example, again, enantiosemy in its paradoxical form tended to be avoided or corrected.

### 3.3 Προμηθεύς

Another potential illustration of enantiosemy can be provided by the interpretations of the name of Prometheus (Προμηθεύς) in Greek. As is well known, a contradiction can appear between the name, which means ‘foresighted’, and the figure of Prometheus, who lacked forethought in his struggle with the gods for the possession of fire. Basically, an enantiosemic etymology could take on two forms, either a contradictory etymology: ‘he is called Prometheus [Προμηθεύς] though he is not foresighted [προμηθής]’, or a paradoxical etymology: ‘he is called Prometheus [Προμηθεύς] because he is not foresighted [προμηθής]’. The etymological treatment of Prometheus in Greek literature, however, does not show any particular predilection for enantiosemy. In the *Theogony* (v. 511), Hesiod depicts Prometheus as ποικίλον αἰολόμητιν ‘artful and clever’, a simple way to allude to its possible etymology through a phonetic echo (-μηθεύς/-μητιν), but to circumvent the risk of contradiction between the name and the reality by a decontextu-

alized explanation. A few verses later, Hesiod depicts Prometheus' action by repeating the initial syllable *προ-* twice (v. 536: *πρόφρονι θυμῷ δασσάμενος προέθηκε*), which can be an allusion to the name of Prometheus, but without any precise qualification. We have probably a more elaborated reference to the etymology of Prometheus a few lines later:

- (33) Hesiod, *Theogony* 546  
τὸν δ' αὖτε *προσέειπε Προμηθεὺς* ἀγκυλομήτης.

And Prometheus answered to him, the crooked in counsel.

The name of Prometheus is surrounded by *προσέειπε* on its left and by *ἀγκυλομήτης* on its right, the former echoing the initial member of Prometheus, the latter its second member. It is probably not by chance that the next verse (v. 547) begins with ἦκ' *ἐπιμειδήσας* 'smiling softly', with a possible allusion to the name of Epimetheus (Ἐπιμηθεύς), Prometheus' negative counterpart; see also v. 559–560: Ἰαπετιονίδη, πάντων πέρι *μήδεα* εἰδώς/ὧ πέπον, οὐκ ἄρα πω δολίης *ἐπιλήθεο* τέχνης. All this represents sound effects, phonic games, but does not constitute a direct etymology of the name of Prometheus. They are indications of how the name was segmented by Hesiod (*προ-* and *-μηθ-*), but not how it was interpreted in relation to the attributes or to the behavior of the figure of Prometheus.

Aeschylus, on the contrary, provides a more direct allusion to the etymology of Prometheus by pointing to its internal contradiction and presenting Prometheus as misnamed:

- (34) Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 85–87  
Ψευδωνύμως σε δαίμονες Προμηθέα  
καλοῦσιν· αὐτὸν γάρ σε δεῖ προμηθέως,  
ὅτῳ τρόπῳ τῇσδ' ἐκκυλισθήσῃ τέχνῃς.

Falsely the gods call you Prometheus, for you yourself need forethought to free yourself from this handiwork.

What is interesting in this example is that the contradiction is presented as such by the adverb *ψευδωνύμως* 'falsely'. It is not resolved by the assumption of a pseudo-causality, which would be the case with a paradoxical etymology: the assumption is not 'A because non-A', but 'A although non-A'; it is a contradictory etymology. Strikingly enough, the scholia hesitated on how to interpret this passage. Some of them restored a causal etymology for Prometheus:

- (35) Scholion ad Aesch. *Prom.* 85 (cf. Herington, 1972): Εὐφυῶς ἀπὸ τοῦ ὀνόματος ἔλαβε τὸ διάνημα. Προμηθεὺς γάρ ἐστιν ὁ προορώων τὰ μήδεα.

It is naturally from the name that he took the thought. Prometheus is the one who foresees the thoughts.

Others pointed to the difficulty and presented the etymology as contradictory:

- (36) Scholion PglW ad Aesch. *Prom.* 85 (cf. Herington, 1972): Φησὶ γὰρ ὅτι ψευδῶς προγνώστης ὀνομάζη, ὁ μᾶλλον προγνώστου δεόμενος ὥτινι τρόπῳ τῶν παρόντων ἐλευθερωθήσῃ δεσμών, ὥστε ἀπὸ τοῦ οἰκείου ὀνόματος διαβάλλει αὐτόν.

He says that it is falsely that he is named ‘forward-looking’, since he needs more than anyone a forward-looking in order to know how to get free from the ties that hold him, so that basing on his usual name he slanders him.

These interpretations show that the Greek scholiasts probably felt uncomfortable with the name of Prometheus, for which a regular causal etymology was not particularly appropriate. Once again, enantiosemy, regarded as a paradoxical causality, seems to be unusual to Greek poets.

### 3.4 Πενθεύς

A further example is given by Euripides in the *Bacchae* (v. 367):

- (37) Euripides, *Bacchae* 367  
Πενθεὺς δ’ ὅπως μὴ πένθος εἰσοῖσιν δόμοις  
τοῖς σοῖσι, Κάδμει.

Beware lest Pentheus bring trouble to your house, Kadmos.

We have here a causal etymology in which the name of Pentheus (Πενθεύς), the king of Thebes, is connected with πένθος ‘grief, sorrow, misfortune’; it can be formulated as follows: ‘Pentheus [Πενθεύς] is so called because he brings misfortune [πένθος]’. But the interesting point is that Tiresias expresses the hope that Pentheus will not bring misfortune to the house, and by doing this, in some way, he hopes to falsify the etymology, to change it from a causal determination into a contradictory one. This could be called an ‘anti-performative etymology’, in which pronouncing the name is supposed to produce the reverse effect of what the name says, its falsification. Falsifying an etymology, however, does not mean building an enantiosemic etymology, and Euripides does not intend to claim that ‘Pentheus [Πενθεύς] is so called because (or though) he does not bring misfortune [πένθος]’. Whatever the manipulation made by Euripides, the etymology is still clearly causal.

### 3.5 Εὐφρόνη

Εὐφρόνη is a poetic name of the ‘night’, derived from the adjective εὖφρων ‘kindly, gracious’. Its first occurrence is found in Hesiod’ *Works and Days* 560, where it refers to a long night’s rest compensating a hard work (μακρὰ γὰρ ἐπίρροθοι εὐφρόναι εἰσίν). Various Greek sources suggest a causal etymology, pointing to the positive aspect of night seen as a restorative rest period. This is explicitly stated by Plutarch:

- (38) Plutarch, *De Curiositate* 12 (compare *Quaestiones Coniuviales* 79): Καὶ τὴν νύκτα προσεῖπον εὐφρόνην μέγα πρὸς εὐρεσιν τῶν ζητουμένων καὶ σκέψιν ἡγούμενοι τὴν ἡσυχίαν καὶ τὸ ἀπερίσπαστον.

And they called the night ‘kindly’ [εὐφρόνη] thinking that its quiet and absence of distraction is greatly conducive to the investigation and solution of the problems in hand. (transl. Helmboldt 1939, modified)

According to Plutarch, the night is called ‘kindly’ because it is conducive to quiet and meditation. There is no evidence that this positive explanation goes back to an ancient tradition; it can reflect Plutarch’s spontaneous invention. What is clear, however, is that the use of εὐφρόνη was readily connected in Greek literature with the beneficial effects of night. Aeschylus, for example, uses εὐφρόνη in reference to the happy sleep of men in a safe environment:

- (39) Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 336–337  
ὥς δ’ εὐδαίμονες/ἀφύλακτον εὐδήσουσι πᾶσαν εὐφρόνην.

Like happy men, they will sleep all the night without guards.

The comparison of εὐφρόνη ‘night’ < ‘the kindly time’ with εὐδαίμονες ‘happy’ suggests a causal etymology: ‘the night [εὐφρόνη] is so-called because it is a kindly time [εὖφρων]’. Note the anaphora εὐδαίμονες ‘happy’ and εὐφρόνη ‘night’, to which one may add εὐδήσουσι ‘they will sleep’ by folk-etymology. We find the same connotation in a passage of Euripides’ *Bacchae*:

- (40) Euripides, *Bacchae*, 237–238  
ὃς ἡμέρας τε κεὺφρόνας συγγίγνεται  
τελετὰς προτείνων εὐίου νεάνισιν.

who is days and nights with the young girls, offering them Bacchic mysteries.

It can be assumed that the use of εὐφρόνη for the ‘night’ was seen as reflecting some positive feature of the night, which suggests a causal etymology. Other passages, however, depict εὐφρόνη in negative terms, pointing to a potential contradiction between the name and the underlying reality, e.g. in Aeschylus:

(41) Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 655

Τοιοῖσδε πάσας εὐφρόνας ὄνειρασι  
συνειχόμεν δύστηνος.

By such dreams I was beset all the nights, to my distress.

There is clearly a contradiction between εὐφρόνας ‘nights’ and δύστηνος ‘unhappy’, expressed by the opposition of the antonyms εὐ- and δυσ-. This contradiction, however, does not signal that the causal etymology of εὐφρόνη is false and should be replaced by an enantiosemic one, but rather that the character in this particular context experiences a situation of distress which is in conflict with the usual restorative function of the night. Εὐφρόνη is often described in the literature as an euphemism, replacing the name of the night by a milder name in order to avoid negative aspects associated with the night. It is likely that εὐφρόνη was originally seen as positive. In any case, no trace of enantiosemic explanation is found for this name.

### 3.6 Ἀριστερός

The adjective ἀριστερός ‘left, on the left’ is usually considered a good instance of euphemism, basing on the assumption that the left position was seen by the Greeks as unlucky, which suggests a contradiction between its negative qualification and its positive designation (from ἄριστος ‘best’). The question here is whether this contradiction gave rise in Greek to enantiosemic explanations of the type ‘it is called the best side though it is the ominous one’ (contradictory etymology) or ‘it is called the best side because it is the ominous one’ (paradoxical etymology). As far as I can judge from the scanty allusions made by Greek authors, there is no evidence that ἀριστερός was ever analyzed in enantiosemic terms. Only one passage by Euripides could potentially reveal a wordplay on ἀριστερός:

(42) Euripides, *Cyclops* 688

Χορός. περιάγου κείσε, πρὸς τὰριστερά.  
Κύκλωψ. οἱμοὶ γελῶμαι. Κερτομεῖτέ μ’ ἐν κακοῖς.

Choir. Turn round this way, to your left.

Cyclops. Oh, I am mocked. You taunt me in my misfortunes.



The choir invites the cyclops to turn ‘to the left’ [πρὸς τὰριστερά], but the cyclops views this invitation as a mockery, since he is in an unfortunate situation [ἐν κακοῖς]. The cyclops’ reaction makes sense if the adjective ἀριστερός is re-motivated as ‘the better side’, which in the context can only be understood as ironic since the character experiences exactly the worst possible situation. The contradiction, however, lies in the dramatic situation, not in the adjective ἀριστερός itself, and contains no allusion whatsoever to the ominous value of the left side.

### 3.7 Conclusion

All the Greek passages discussed so far have in common a certain resemblance to enantiosemic etymology, but none of them is really enantiosemic. They reject the potential contradiction between the name and the reality through the back door, or they point to a contradiction in a particular context without attempting to build any etymology on this contradiction (contradictory etymology) or to transform it into a causal link (paradoxical etymology). As far as enantiosemy is concerned, these instances are missed opportunities, and this seems to be the case globally in the Greek tradition. The only clear allusion to an enantiosemic etymology is in Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound* 85–87, where the name of Prometheus is qualified as ‘falsely called’ (ψευδωνύμως), suggesting a contradictory etymology (‘he is called Prometheus *though* it is not foresighted’). It can be argued that there was in the Greek etymological tradition a distinction between ‘true’ (= causal) and ‘false’ (= contradictory) etymologies, the former denoted by the adjective ἐπώνυμος, the latter by ψευδώνυμος. There is evidence that ἐπώνυμος was used to refer to an etymology based on a true characteristic of the referent (cf. Homer, *I* 562, η 54, τ 409, *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 373), whereas ψευδώνυμος was used to refer to an etymology contradictory to the referent (cf. Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 85, *Prometheus Bound* 717, *Seven against Thebes* 670).<sup>9</sup> If this is the case, this suggests that the Greeks were able to distinguish causal and contradictory etymologies, but this does not substantiate the claim that enantiosemy, narrowly conceived of as paradoxical etymology, was popular in Ancient Greece.

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<sup>9</sup> See Schweyzer-Keller 1972, 21–24. On ψευδώνυμος see Reinberg 1983, 45–58.

## 4 The Latin development

When we move to the Latin world, we set foot on a completely different territory. Paradoxical enantiosemy is a consistent pattern in the Latin etymological tradition, widely discussed and illustrated both by grammarians and scholiasts, and one could expect it to be reflected as a stylistic device in Latin literature as well. The role of the Stoic inheritance in this mushrooming of enantiosemic etymology in Latin is far from clear. A Stoic influence can be detected on the grammarian Aelius Stilo (ca 150–ca 70 BCE), a great practitioner of enantiosemic etymologies,<sup>10</sup> but we cannot assess its extent with certainty. A point to which particular attention needs to be paid is that the Latin sources sometimes provide examples of enantiosemic etymologies of Greek words and names. For example, the late grammarian Servius (4th–5th century CE), in his commentary on the works of Vergil, explains the Greek name of Charon (Χάρων), the ferryman of Hades, by the fact that he is not a merry (χαίρων ‘rejoicing’) fellow:

- (43) Servius, *In Vergilii Aeneidem Commentarii ad Aen.* 6.299 (cf. Maltby 1991, 124): Charon κατὰ ἀντίφρασιν quasi ἀχαίρων.

Charon [*Charon*] by antiphrasis, as though not rejoicing [ἀχαίρων].

It is possible that this etymology reflects an ancient Greek tradition,<sup>11</sup> but it cannot be excluded that it was invented by Latin scholars out of Greek material. Proof of this is provided by the fact that there are hybrid forms of enantiosemy, deriving Latin from Greek, the most striking one being the etymology of the Latin adjective *āridus* ‘arid’, transmitted by Festus (2nd c. CE):

- (44) Festus, *De Significatione Verborum* 11 (cf. Maltby 1991, 51–52): *Aridum proprie est, quod naturalem humorem amisit. Dicitur autem per contrariam significationem, quod inrigari desierit, nam ὀρδεύειν Graece inrigare est.*

*Aridus* is properly what has lost the natural humor. It is based on the contrary meaning, because it has ceased to be irrigated; for ὀρδεύειν in Greek means ‘to irrigate’.

<sup>10</sup> Cicero (*Brutus* 206) writes that ‘the same Aelius wanted to be Stoic’ (*idem Aelius Stoicus esse uoluit*). On Aelius Stilo and the Stoic philosophy see Müller 1910, 101–114, Lallot 1991, 143, Desbordes 1991, 150.

<sup>11</sup> Aristophanes (*Ranae* 184) makes a pun between the name of Charon and the imperative of χαίρω (χαῖρ’ ὦ Χάρων, χαῖρ’ ὦ Χάρων, χαῖρ’ ὦ Χάρων), but it cannot be sure that what he has in mind is really an enantiosemic pattern: a pun is not necessarily based on a conscious etymology.

The enantiosemic etymology is here bilingual, based on a connection between a Latin word and its alleged Greek source: ‘it is arid (Lat. *āridus*) because it is not irrigated (Gr. ἀρδεύειν)’.

The origins of enantiosemic etymology in Latin cannot be established with precision. As already said, the first figure that emerges is Aelius Stilo (ca 150–ca 70 BCE), a Latin grammarian known to have belonged to the Stoic school. He is credited with having proposed some of the earliest enantiosemic etymologies of Latin words.<sup>12</sup> Three of them are famous, *caelum* ‘sky’ from *cēlātum* ‘hidden’, because the sky is not hidden, but open:

- (45) Aelius Stilo, *apud* Varro, *De Lingua Latina*, V.18 (cf. Maltby 1991, 92): *Caelum dictum scribit Aelius, quod caelatum, aut contrario nomine celatum, quod apertum est.*

Aelius writes that *caelum* ‘sky’ comes from *caelatum* ‘ornated’, or as a contrary name from *celatum* ‘hidden’, because it is open.

Similarly, *mīles* ‘soldier’ is from *mollis* ‘soft’, because a soldier is not soft, but harsh:

- (46) Aelius Stilo, *apud* Festus, *De Significatione Verborum* 122 (cf. Maltby 1991, 384): *Militem Aelius a mollitia κατ’ ἀντιφράσιν dictum putat, eo, quod nihil molle, sed potius asperum quid gerat.*

Aelius thinks that *miles* ‘soldier’ comes from *mollitia* ‘softness’ by antiphrasis, because there is nothing soft, but rather harsh that he does.

And *ordinārius* ‘ordinary soldier’ from *ordine* ‘in order’, because an ordinary soldier does not live in order:

- (47) Aelius Stilo, *apud* Festus, *De Significatione Verborum* 182 (cf. Maltby 1991, 434): *Ordinarium hominem ait dici solitum Aelius Stilo, qui minime ordine viveret.*

Aelius says that *ordinarius* ‘ordinary’ is usually a soldier who lives the least according to the order of things.

In these three instances the figure is clearly enantiosemic (paradoxical etymology):

‘the sky (*caelum*) is so called for not being hidden (*celatum*)’

‘the soldier (*miles*) is so called for not being soft (*mollis*)’

‘an ordinary man (*ordinarius*) is so called for not living according to the order (*ordo*, *-inis*)’.

12 Cf. Müller 1910, 104.

According to an ancient tradition going back to Festus (*De Significatione verborum* 146), Aelius Stilo is credited with explaining the name of the spirits of the deads, the Manes (Lat. *dī mānēs*), by an adjective *manus* ‘good’ on the assumption that these chthonic deities are so called by enantiosem. This euphemistic etymology is explicitly mentioned as a case of antiphrasis by Servius (end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE) in his *Commentary on Vergil*:

- (48) Servius, *In Vergilii Aeneidem Commentarii* 1.139 (cf. Maltby 1991, 364): *Per antiphrasin ‘manes’ inferi, quia non sint boni.*

By antiphrasis, the ‘Manes’ are infernal, since they are not good.

Finally, it has been suggested that the most famous Latin example of enantiosemic etymology—the *lucus a non lucendo* example mentioned at the beginning of this chapter—goes back to Aelius Stilo, but we do not have clear evidence of its existence before Quintilian (*Institutio Oratoria* I.6.34). The attribution to Aelius Stilo, first proposed by Funaioli (1907, 72), is not certain, but it would be quite in line with its usual etymological practice. Aelius Stilo certainly played a key role in popularizing enantiosem in Rome.

In spite of the profound influence of Aelius Stilo on Varro (116–27 BCE), it is a real surprise to find virtually no trace of enantiosem in Varro’s *De Lingua latina*. On the contrary, whenever Varro mentions enantiosemic etymologies attributed to Aelius Stilo, he seems to distance himself from them and prefers to adhere to sounder etymologies. For example, it is only with reluctance that Varro mentions Aelius Stilo’s enantiosemic derivation of *caelum* ‘sky’ from *cēlātum* ‘hidden’ (on the assumption that a sky is not hidden). He prefers to explain it in a different way:

- (49) Varro, *De Lingua Latina* V.18: *Non minus illud alterum de celando potuit dici, quod interdum celatur, quam quod noctu non celatur.*

But that second origin, from *celare* ‘to hide’, could be said from this fact, that by day it is hidden [*celatur*], no less than that by night it is not hidden [*non celatur*].

In a similar way, while Aelius Stilo derived *miles* ‘soldier’ from *mollis* ‘soft’ by enantiosem, Varro (*De Lingua latina* V.89) prefers to connect it with *mille* ‘thousand’ on the assumption that a legion is composed of several thousands of soldiers. Generally speaking, Varro distances himself from enantiosem.

The same reservations appear in the work of another influential grammarian, Quintilian (ca 35–96 CE). His rejection of enantiosem (as well as etymology in general) is clearly reflected in the following passage:

- (50) Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 1.6.34 (ca 95 CE): *Etiamne a contrariis aliqua sinemus trahi, ut 'lucus' quia umbra opacus parum luceat, et 'ludus' quia sit longissime a lusu, et 'Ditis' quia minime diues?*

But are we also to admit the derivation of certain words from their opposites, and accept *lucus*, since a grove is dark with shade, *ludus* in the sense of school as being so called because it is quite the reverse of 'play' [*lusus*] and *Dis*, *Ditis* from *diues*, because Pluto is far from being rich?

During the first century of the Roman Empire, enantiosemic etymologies are attributed to two little-known grammarians, Cincius, who lived under Augustus (27 BCE–14 CE), and Curiatius, who was killed under Domitian (81–96 CE). Both are credited with the enantiosemic etymology of the Latin word *nacca* 'a fuller', according to Festus:

- (51) Festus, *De Significatione Verborum* 166.7 (cf. Maltby 1991, 51–52): *Naccae appellantur uolgo fullones, ut ait Curiatius, quod nauci non sint, i.e. nullius pretii. Idem sentit et Cincius. Quidam aiunt, quod omnia fere opera ex lana νάκη dicantur a Graecis.*

Fullers are called by the people *naccae*, as Curiatius says, because they do not value a 'straw' [*nauci*], i.e. are good for nothing. Some say that almost all their work is called from Greek, from the 'wool' [νάκη].

The enantiosemic explanation ('they are called *naccae* because they do not value a *nauci*') is certainly intended to produce a comic effect, in which representatives of the profession are disqualified by an etymological link with a cut-and-dried formula, used with negative connotations.

The overall image that emerges from this is that enantiosemy was relatively widespread at the turn of the Roman Empire, even if it was still regarded as controversial and rejected by some leading figures of the scholarly community. To assess its impact on the Latin literature is therefore of the greatest relevance, since it can show how these scholarly debates were perceived in literary circles.

Let us back up a little bit and begin with Latin comedy. It is clear that the contradiction revealed by the contradiction expressed by an enantiosemy may serve to create a comic effect, and comedy writers, such as Plautus, did not hesitate to resort to enantiosemy to make some of their characters ridiculous. This is particularly striking in relation to the names given to those characters. In the *Persa*, for example, a glutton is called *Saturio*, obviously because he cannot ever get enough [*satur*]. The pun created by the potential contradiction is not unlike an enantiosemic etymology, defined in paradoxical terms ('he is called *Saturio* because he is not satisfied'), but it could also be interpreted as a contradictory

etymology ('he is called *Saturio* though he is not satisfied'). It is highlighted in the following terms:

(52) Plautus, *Persa* 103:

*Nam Essurio uenio, non aduenio Saturio.*

For as Hungerio I am coming, not as Saturio am I coming.

Interestingly enough, what we have here is not only enantiosemy, understood as a paradoxical etymology ('A because non-A') or as a contradictory etymology ('A though non-A'), but also the creation of a new, more adequate name *Essurio* 'the eating one', instead of *Saturio* (from which it is obviously derived). In the same vein, in the *Mostellaria* (v. 568), Plautus calls a money lender *Misargyrides* 'money despiser' (from Greek μισέω 'to hate, to despise' and ἄργυρον 'money'). In both cases, the proper noun alludes to the opposite of the reality and enantiosemy is used to create a distorting effect between the name of a character and its behavior.<sup>13</sup>

With Augustan poetry, the use of enantiosemy as a poetic device takes on a more elaborated shape. We know that the Augustan poetry was very fond of etymologies, and we can expect enantiosemy to be among the stylistic devices reflected in that poetry. The fact is, however, that there are very few examples of true enantiosemic etymologies in Augustan poetry. Desbordes (1991, 153) listed 350 explicit etymologies in Augustan poetry, but only one of them is undeniably enantiosemic. In the *Fasti* (8 CE), the poet Ovid describes as follows the *ancile*, the small oval shield of the Salian priests, which is said to have fallen from heaven under the king Numa Pompilius:

(53) Ovid, *Fasti* III.377

*Idque ancile uocat, quod ab omni parte recisum est,  
quemque notes oculis, angulus omnis abest.*

And he called it *ancile*, because it was cut away all round, and there was not a single angle to note with one's eyes.

Remarkably enough, Ovid is here alluding to two possible etymologies. The first one is referred to by the adjective *recisum* 'cut away' and suggests the derivation of *ancile* from a verb *\*amb-cīdō* 'to cut away from both sides' (cf. *ancīsa* in Lucretius, *De Natura Rerum*, III.660); this etymology is given by Varro and Festus and is still positively advocated in modern times (*ancile* < *\*am(b)+cī(d)-sli-*).

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<sup>13</sup> On these examples see Knox 1989, 162 fn. 22.

- (54) Varro, *De Lingua Latina* VII.3.14: *Ancilia dicta ab ambecisu, quod ea arma, ab utraque parte, ut peltae Thracum, incisa.*

The ancilia [shields] are so called from being cut away on the two sides [ambecisu], because these weapons are cut away on the two sides, like the Thracian shields [peltae].

- (55) Festus, *De Significatione Verborum* 117 (s.u. Mamuri): *Scutum breue quod ideo sic est appellatum quod ex utroque latere erat recisum ut summum infimumque eius latius medio pateret.*

A short shield which is so called because it is cut away from both sides so that its top and its bottom were broader than its middle.

The other etymology alluded to by Ovid is enantiosemic and can be formulated in the following terms: ‘this shield is called *ancile*, because it does not have any angle [angulus]’. It is based on the resemblance of the initial syllable (*anc-/ang-*). As far as I know, this etymology is not given by any other source and seems to be an invention of Ovid. This etymological wordplay reflects a strong interest toward scholarly debates, alluding to both a current etymology (*ancile/recisum*) and another etymology (*ancile/angulus*) at the same time.

There is no other direct enantiosemic etymology in Augustan poetry, but one could find indirect allusions in different passages where phonetic echoes create a link between two words known by other sources to be related by an enantiosemic relationship. This method admittedly presents a certain number of dangers. It can always be claimed that the presence of the two words in the same context is accidental, and it is clear that the evidence cannot be adopted unreservedly. However, Desbordes (1991) has convincingly shown that etymological allusions through phonetic echoes are a current practice in the Augustan poetry, and the only step forward would be to assume that enantiosemy was a potential element of the same practice. Of course, the distinction between contradictory and paradoxical etymologies is crucial. Let us take first a relatively clear example, detected in a passage of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, in which a description of the Golden Age is given, with the picture of a peaceful people:

- (56) Ovid, *Metamorphoses* I.99–100  
*...sine militis usu*  
*mollia securae peragebant otia gentes.*

Without military occupation, people without trouble enjoyed sweet repose.

The contrastive echo *militis* ‘soldier’ (gen.sg.) vs. *mollia* ‘soft, tender’ (neut.pl.), based on a common phonetic structure /m...l/, cannot fail to be recognized. It is

obviously reminiscent of the famous enantiosemic etymology, developed by Aelius Stilo, according to which a soldier [*miles*] is so called for not being soft [*mollis*]:

- (57) Aelius Stilo, *apud Festus, De Significatione Verborum* 122 (cf. Maltby 1991, 384): *Militem Aelius a mollitia κατ' ἀντίφρασιν dictum putat, eo, quod nihil molle, sed potius asperum quid gerat.*

Aelius thinks that *miles* 'soldier' comes from *mollitia* 'softness', because there is nothing soft, but rather harsh that he does.

It seems likely that this passage of Ovid refers to this enantiosemic etymology, which was certainly well-known enough at his time to be alluded to by the simple co-occurrence of the two words in the same context. This is not a direct etymology, framed in the form of a historical derivation ('A from B'), but only a potential allusion to such an etymology, a rather elusive one. It was, however, certainly recognized by the highly educated audience for whom Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are intended.

Continuing in this direction, it can be argued that the well-known *lucus a non lucendo* etymology surfaces in a passage of Vergil's *Georgics*:

- (58) Vergil, *Georgics* IV.468–472  
*Et caligantem nigra formidine lucum*  
*Ingressus, Manesque adiit regemque tremendum,*  
*Nesciaque humanis precibus mansuescere corda.*  
*At cantu commotae Erebi de sedibus imis*  
*Umbrae ibant tenues simulacraque luce carentum.*

And he entered to the grove, grim with a horror of great darkness, and faced the Manes and the King of terrors, the stone heart no human prayer can tame. Then, from the deepest deeps of Erebus, wrung by his minstrelsy, the hollow shades came trooping, ghostly semblances of forms lost to the light.

One may suggest that the qualification of the *lūcus* 'grove' as *cālīgāns* 'dark' opens the way to an allusion to the *lucus a non lucendo* etymology. A few verses later, Vergil presents the shadows coming from the deeps of Erebus as 'ghosts deprived of light' (*simulacra... luce carentum*), and the description of the ghosts could also apply to the grove (*lūcus*), as a sort of distance etymological commentary: a 'grove' (*lūcus*) is so called for being 'deprived of light' (*lūce carēns*). My observation involves, of course, an element of speculation, and the co-occurrence of *lūcum* and *lūce carēntum* could well be due to chance. But, knowing that Vergil's poetry was infused with allusions to the scholarly debates of his time, it



would be no wonder to find such a subtle echo to the *lucus a non lucendo* etymology in this context. More generally, it is striking that Vergil typically describes groves in terms of darkness, as in the following passage of the *Aeneid*:

- (59) Vergil, *Aeneid* VI.673  
*Nulli certa domus; lucis habitamus opacis.*

No one has a fixed home, we dwell in opaque groves.

The close association of *lūcus* and the adjective *opācus* ‘opaque’ is reminiscent of the way it is described within the enantiosemic etymology, as shown by Quintilian’s formulation:

- (60) Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* I.6.34  
*‘lucus’ quia umbra opacus parum luceat.*

‘grove’ [*lucus*] since a dark shadow is little bright [*luceat*]

Once again, the evidence for a direct allusion to the enantiosemic pattern is rather scanty; the pertinence of this matching could be questioned. But the interesting point is that from the Augustan poetry onwards the term *lūcus* is consistently related to darkness, cf. *lucoque umbrosa vetusto* (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* XI.352), *niger...lucus* (Ovid, *Fasti* II.165), *umbrante luco* (Seneca, *Hercules furens* 709), etc.

Another example will confirm that etymological wordplays based on phonetic echoes are a possible pattern in Latin poetry and that they can include enantiosemic etymologies, but it reveals a higher degree of elaboration. A well-known enantiosemic etymology is that of the name of the ‘Fates’, the *Parcae*. Their name is usually derived by enantiosemy from the verb *parcō* ‘to spare’, on the assumption that they spare nobody. The enantiosemic etymology is given by Servius in his commentary to Vergil:

- (61) Servius, *In Vergilii Aeneidem Commentarii ad Aen.* 1.22: *Et dictae sunt parcae κατὰ ἀντιφράσιν, quod nulli parcant, sicut lucus a non lucendo, bellum a nulla re bella.*

And the *Parcae* [*Parcae*] are so called by antiphrasis, because they spare [*parcant*] nobody, as in *lucus a non lucendo, bellum a nulla re bella*.

There is no clear allusion to this etymology in Augustan poetry, but a passage of Vergil’s *Aeneid* (XII.149–150) could reveal a more complex wordplay deriving from the principle of enantiosemy:

(62) Vergil, *Aeneid* XII.149–150

*Nunc iuuenem imparibus uideo concurrere fatis,  
Parcarumque dies et uis inimica propinquat.*

But now I see our youthful champion make his war with fates adverse; the Parcae's day of doom and a hostile strength implacably impend.

The name of the *Parcae* is announced in advance by the noun phrase *imparibus...fatis* 'with the fates adverse'. An etymological wordplay can be recognized here, based on the common initial *Parcae/imparibus*, a wordplay that can only be achieved with the background of an enantiosemic etymology, either in the form of a paradoxical etymology: 'the Parcae [*Parcae*] are so called because they are not auspicious [*im-pares*]' or in the form of a contradictory etymology: 'the Parcae [*Parcae*] are so called though they are not auspicious [*im-pares*]'. This wordplay can be considered a variation on the more widespread enantiosemic pattern *Parcae/nulli parcant*. As in the preceding examples (*ancile* vs. *angulus* or *lucum* vs. *luce carentum*), the etymological wordplay is supported by an acronymic phonetic echo, realized on the initial syllable.

Such allusions to enantiosemic etymologies are parts of a scholarly practice of poetry, created inside educated circles well informed about philological and grammatical debates. Nonetheless, their implementation remains limited, even in Augustan poetry, and, apart from those unique examples from Vergil and Ovid, they are virtually non-existent in Latin literature. The reason for this is obviously their paradoxical character, which renders their mention relatively unnatural in poetical contexts, where etymological wordplays usually serve to support or confirm elements of a description.

Apart from these few available sources going back to the classical age, most of our knowledge about Latin enantiosemy comes from the Late Latin period. From the fourth century CE onwards, enantiosemic etymologies are transmitted by grammarians, among which one could mention Aelius Donatus (ca 320–380), Flavius Charisius (4th c. CE), Diomedes Grammaticus (4th c. CE), Maurus Servius (end of the 4th c. CE) and, last but not least, Isidore of Seville (c. 560–636 CE). These grammarians usually repeat the same definitions and give the same examples, sometimes word for word, and it is all too clear that they cannot make a claim for original thinking, but are only compilers of previous works:

(63) Aelius Donatus, *Ars maior*, ed. L. Holtz (1981, 672.8): *Antiphrasis est unius verbi ironia, ut bellum, lucus et parcae: bellum, hoc est minime bellum, et lucus eo quod non luceat, et parcae eo quod nulli parcant.*

Antiphrasis is irony of a single word, like *bellum* 'war', i.e. not beautiful at all, and *lucus* 'grove' because it is not bright, and *parcae* 'the Parcae' because they spare nobody.

- (64) Flavius Charisius, *Charisii Ars*, ed. K. Barwick (1964, 364.9): *Antiphrasis uero diversitatem rei nominat, ut bellum dicitur, quod minime sit bellum, et lucus, quod minime luceat.*

Antiphrasis names the diversity of a thing, like *bellum* so called because it is not beautiful at all, and *lucus*, because it is not bright at all.

- (65) Diomedes Grammaticus, *Diomedis Ars (Grammatici Latini)*, 1.462, 14): *Antiphrasis est dictio e contrario significans, ut bellum dicitur, quod minime est bonum, et lucus, quod minime luceat, et Parcae, quod minime parcant.*

Antiphrasis is a figure meaning something by its contrary, like *bellum* so called because it is not good at all, and *lucus*, because it is not bright at all, and *Parcae*, because they do not spare at all.

- (66) Servius, *In Vergilii Aeneidem Commentarii ad Aen.* 1.441: *Lucus autem dicitur quod non luceat, non quod sint ibi lumina causa religionis, ut quidam uolunt.*

*Lucus* is so called from not being bright, not because it contains lights due to the religion, as some argue.

- (67) Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 1.37.24: *Antiphrasis est sermo e contrario intellegendus, ut lucus quia caret lucem per nimiam nemorum umbram; et manes id est mites (quum sint inmites) et modesti (cum sint terribiles et inmanes); et Parcas et Eumenides Furiae quod nulli parcant uel benefaciant.*

Antiphrasis is an explanation to be understood by the contrary, like *lucus* because it lacks light due to the excessive shadow of the woods; and *manes* i.e. gentle (though they are not gentle) and modest (though they are terrible and not kind); and the *Parcae* and *Eumenides*, the Furies, because they spare nobody and do good to nobody.

The contribution of these late grammarians is important, as we owe to them some of the most significant paradoxical etymologies of the antique world, including a few etymologies not documented before them. Among these etymologies stand out the following items, *bellum* ‘war’ < *bellus* ‘beautiful’ (Maltby 1991, 77–78):

- (68) Flavius Charisius, *Charisii Ars*, ed. K. Barwick (1964, 364.9): *Bellum dicitur, quod minime sit bellum.*

‘war’ [*bellum*] is so called because it is not ‘beautiful’ [*bellus*].

*foedus* ‘treatise’ < *foedus* ‘awful’ (Maltby 1991, 237):

- (69) Augustine, *De Dialectica* VI.10: *foederis nomen, quod res foeda non sit.*

the name of the ‘treaty’ [*foedus*], because it is not ‘ugly’ [*foedus*].

*lutum* ‘mud’ < *lauare* ‘to wash’ (Maltby 1991, 353):

(70) Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 1.29.3: *A lauando lutum, dum lutum non sit mundum.*

From ‘to wash’ [*lauare*] derives ‘mud’ [*lutum*], since the mud is not clean.

Lesser known are *deus* ‘God’ < *desum* ‘to lack’ (Maltby 1991, 185):

(71) Festus, *De Significatione Verborum* 71: *Deus dictus, quod ei nihil desit.*

‘God’ [*Deus*] is so called because He does not ‘lack’ [*desit*] anything.

*ignis* ‘fire’ < *gignere* ‘to generate’ (Maltby 1991, 293):

(72) Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* XIX.6.5: *Ignis...dictus, quod nihil gigni potest ex eo.*

‘Fire’ [*ignis*] is so called because nothing can ‘be created’ [*gigni*] from it.

*senex* ‘old’ < *sensus* ‘sensation’ (Maltby 1991, 559):

(73) Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* XI.2.27: *Senes...quidam dictos putant a sensus diminutione.*

Some claim that ‘old men’ [*senes*] are so called from the decrease of the ‘sensation’ [*sensus*].

*siccus* ‘dry’ < *succus* ‘juice’ (Maltby 1991, 565):

(74) Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* X.262: *siccus... per antiphrasin, quod sit sine succo.*

‘dry’ [*siccus*] by antiphrasis, because it is without ‘juice’ [*succus*].

*uidua* ‘widow’ < *uir* ‘man’ (Maltby 1991, 644):

(75) Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* IX.7.16: *Vidua uocata, quod cum uiro duo non fuerit.*

‘Widow’ [*uidua*], because she does not live as a ‘couple’ [*duo*] with a ‘man’ [*uir*].

*uirgo* ‘virgin’ < *uir* ‘man’ (Maltby 1991, 648):

(76) Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* XI.2.21: *Virgo est quae uirum nescit.*

‘Virgin’ [*uirgo*] is one who does not know any ‘man’ [*uir*].

These enantiosemic etymologies often compete with causal etymologies (e.g. Lat. *deus* from Gr. θεός ‘God’ or δέος ‘fear’, or *lutum* ‘mud’ from Gr. λύειν ‘to dissolve’).

This shows that enantiosemy was just one possible explanation, not even a predominant one, and there is ground for assuming that it had lost none of its unnaturalness to the majority of scholars. Another lesson that can be drawn from these examples is that paradoxical etymologies are more usual than contradictory etymologies and that the most important thing seems to have been to reconstruct a causal link, even if this causal link was based on a paradoxical explanation.

## 5 From the Middle Ages to the 19th century

Isidore of Seville is certainly the scholar most open to enantiosemy in late antiquity, and this had far-reaching consequences on the posterity of this etymological practice, considering the key role of Isidore in the transmission of antique grammatical knowledge to the Middle Ages. It is, therefore, not surprising to find enantiosemy often referred to in medieval literature. Isidore's examples (*bellum* 'war', *lucus* 'grove', etc.) are repeatedly taught by subsequent grammarians. An example, discussed by Jeudy (1998, 81–95), is Remigius of Auxerre (Remi d'Auxerre, 841–ca 908 CE), a grammarian living during the Carolingian period. In his *Commentary on Phocas*, Remigius of Auxerre still mentions positively the etymology of *bellum* 'war' from *bellus* 'beautiful' and of *lucus* 'grove' from the verb *lucere* 'to be bright' (*quod minime luceat*).

The most cited enantiosemic motif during the Middle Ages is the *mundus immundus* motif, expanding on the idea that the 'world' [*mundus*] is 'unclean, impure' [*immundus*]. This motif goes back to a passage of one of Augustine's *Tractates on the Gospel of John* (5th century CE):

- (77) Augustine, *Tractatus in Johannis Euangelium* XXXVIII.6: *Si delectat te mundus, semper uis esse immundus; si autem iam non te delectat hic mundus, iam tu es mundus.*

If the 'world' [*mundus*] delights you, you want always to be 'unclean' [*immundus*]; but if this 'world' [*mundus*] no longer delights you, you are already 'clean' [*mundus*].

The same motif was repeated a few centuries later by Hincmar (ca 800–882 CE), archbishop of Reims in the 9th century:

- (78) Hincmar, *De praedestinatione Dei et libero arbitrio* 126.455 (cf. Devisse 1976, 932): *Et cum te raptum habuit fecit mundus sicut solet facere mundus immundus, cunctos quos accepti de cepit, cunctos quibus arrisit inrisit.*

And, as it captured you, the ‘world’ [*mundus*] did as an ‘impure world’ [*mundus immundus*] used to do: all those it took it deceived them; it mocked all those upon whom it smiled.

The diffusion of the *mundus immundus* motif during the Middle Ages was described by Zink (1976, 290–291) and Buridant (1998) from whom I am borrowing here a few references. In his treatise *De uanitate mundi* (‘On the vanity of world’), the German theologian Hugh of Saint-Victor (ca 1096–1141), who was active in the Abbey of Saint-Victor in Paris in the 12th century, begins with an apostrophe to the *mundus immundus* ‘the unclean world’, playing with the discrepancy between the formal resemblance and the semantic contradiction. In the *Carmina Burana*, a collection of medieval poetry written in Germany between the 11th and the 13th centuries, the same motif is alluded to:

- (79) *Carmina Burana* 42.4 (ed. Hilka, Schumann 1930, l.76, cited by Buridant 1998, 37–38)

*Roma mundi caput est,  
Sed nil capit mundum,  
Quod pendet a capite,  
Totum est immundum.*

Rome is the head of the ‘world’ [*mundus*], but retains nothing ‘pure’ [*mundum*]; what comes from the head is completely ‘impure’ [*immundum*].

The *mundus immundus* motif was sometimes translated into Romance vernaculars. For example, a famous French trouvère of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Baudoin de Condé, devotes a poem *Des mondes et des mondés* to the impurity of world and writes:

- (80) Baudoin de Condé, *Des mondes et des mondés* 15–18 (ed. Scheler 1866, 149, cited by Buridant 1998, 34)

*De mil ne sunt puis doi mondé  
Del monde, c’on claime monde ! É !  
Por quoi dont le non de monde a  
Li mondes, ki ainc ne monda.*

Of thousand there are not two who are ‘purified’ [*mondé*] from the ‘world’ [*monde*] that is claimed ‘pure’ [*monde*]! Ah! Why does the ‘world’ [*monde*] carry the name of ‘monde’, though it never ‘purified’ [*monda*] anything.

The famous French poet Rutebeuf (ca 1230–ca 1285) alludes to the same etymology:

- (81) Rutebeuf, *Des plaies du monde* 1–2  
*Rimeir me covient de cest monde  
Qui de touz biens ce uuide et monde.*

I like to make up rhymes about this ‘world’ [*monde*], which empties and ‘purifies’ [*monde*] itself of all goods.

As late as the 17th century, two preachers, Othon Casman (1606), and Paul Egard (1668), wrote two books significantly entitled *Mundus Immundus*. A French-English dictionary of the same time still mentions the etymological connection:

- (82) Rande Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues*, s.u. monde [1611]: *Qui veut la conscience monde, il doit fuir le monde immonde.*

He who wants to have a ‘pure’ [*monde*] conscience has to escape the ‘impure world’ [*monde immonde*].

(= Engl. *He that affects a cleane conscience, must auoid uncleande copefmates.*)

Apart from the *mundus immundus* motif, which remained popular until modern times and was used mainly for theological purposes, the Renaissance seems to have distanced itself from enantiosemy.<sup>14</sup> To be true, Isidore’s legacy is still repeated by some humanists, e.g. by Georg Henisch (1549–1618) in an influential book on rhetoric (1593):

- (83) Georg Henisch, *Praeceptiones Rhetoricae* III.199 [1593]: *Antiphrasis est, cum uox aliqua pro contraria ponitur. [...] In deriuatione, ut parcas affirmant dici, quia nemini parcunt; & lucum, quia minime luceat.*

Antiphrasis is when a word replaces its contrary. [...] In derivation, as when some claim that the ‘Fates’ [*Parcae*] are so called because they ‘spare’ [*parcunt*] nobody; and the ‘grove’ [*lucus*] because it is not ‘bright’ [*luceat*] at all.

On the other hand, enantiosemy is rejected by one of the leading figures of the Renaissance humanism, Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484–1558). In a discussion on ‘antiphrasis’, he seems to acknowledge the principle of enantiosemy as valid, but in fact dismisses each of the classical enantiosemic etymologies transmitted by antique grammarians:

- (84) Julius Caesar Scaliger, *Poetices libri septem* 142 [1561]: *Quidam irridere vifi sunt hoc confilium Grammaticorum. Nos tamen neque confilium improbamus: neque probamus rationes quibus ad id sentiendum adducti sunt, quippe Lucum aiunt, quòd non luceat: nos quia sacrificiorum frequentia luceat. Bellum, quod minimè fit bellum, nos, quia fuit initio Duellum à duobus. nam licet multi sunt milites duae tamen partes sunt. & inter duos tantum primum bellum fuit.*

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14 Cf. the presentation by Knox 1989, 159–169.

Some appeared to have jeered this principle of Grammarians [*antiphrasis*]. As far as we are concerned, we do not disapprove neither the principle, nor the reasons for which they were led to this assumption: they say ‘grove’ [*lucus*], because it is not ‘bright’ [*lucet*]; for us, because it is ‘bright’ [*luceat*] due to the frequency of sacrifices. ‘War’ [*bellum*], because it is not ‘beautiful’ [*bellum*]; for us, because it was at the beginning *duellum* from ‘two’; even if there are many fighters, there are two parts, and war was first conducted only between two.

Another humanist, Franciscus Sanctius (1523–1601), is even more radical in his dismissing of antiphrasis. He devotes a chapter of his book *Minerua fivē de caufis linguae latinae* (1587) to an outright criticism of antiphrasis (the title is significant: *Exploditur grammaticorum antiphrasis*):

- (85) Franciscus Sanctius, *Minerua fivē de caufis linguae latinae* IV.150 [1587]: *Ad nauseam usque repetunt indocti grammatici antiphrasin figuram; Parcae enim affirmant dici quia nemini par-cunt, et lucum, quia minime lucet; et huiusmodi sexcenta monstra. Sed ego illos hic, ut in aliis omnibus, in media luce caligare uel potius caecutire ostendam. Ac primum omnium uocem ipsam antiphrasin ignorant: phrasis enim non dictionem unicam significat, sed orationem aut loquendi modum.*

Uneducated grammarians repeat ad nauseam the figure of antiphrasis; they say that the ‘Parcae’ [*Parcae*] are so called because they ‘spare’ [*parcunt*] nobody, and the ‘grove’ [*lucus*] because it is not ‘bright’ [*lucet*]; and hundreds of such monsters. But I will show that these grammarians, here as in all other matters, are in the darkness or rather are blind in full light. And, first of all, they ignore the meaning of the word itself ‘antiphrasis’: phrasis does not refer to a unique mode of expression, but to a figure of speech or figure of style.

He refuses enantiosemy as an etymological principle and limits its scope to a figure of rhetoric, like irony and euphemism.

The classical age reproduces the Renaissance ways of thinking by limiting antiphrasis to the field of rhetoric and rejecting enantiosemic etymologies. To give but an example, the French rhetorician César Chesneau Dumarsais (1676–1756) devotes several pages to the rejection of antiphrasis:

- (86) César Chesneau Dumarsais, *Des Tropes ou Des Differens Sens dans lesquels on peut prendre un même mot dans une même langue*, 175–176 [1730]: *L'Euphémisme & l'Ironie ont donné lieu aux Grammairiens d'inventer une figure qu'ils apèlent Antiphrase, c'est-à-dire, contre-vérité ; par exemple: La mer noire fujète à de fréquens naufrages, & dont les bords étoient habités par des homes extrêmement féroces, étoit apelée le Pont-Euxin, c'est-à-dire, mer favorable à ses hôtes, mer hospitalière. [...] Sanctius & quelques autres ne veulent point mètre l'antiphrase au rang des figures. Il y a en éfet je ne sai quoi d'opofé à l'ordre naturel, de nomer une chose par son contraire, d'apeler lumineux un objet parce qu'il est obscur ; l'antiphrase ne satisfait pas l'esprit.*

Euphemism and irony led the grammarians to invent a figure which they call antiphrasis, i.e. untruth; for example: the Black Sea, subject to frequent sinkings, and the shores of



which are inhabited by extremely ferocious men, was called Euxine, i.e. well disposed towards its guests, hospitable sea. [...]. Sanctius and a few others refuse to define antiphrasis as a figure. There is, indeed, something opposed to the natural order to name a thing by its contrary, to call luminous an object because it is obscure; antiphrasis is not satisfying to the spirit.

He even tries to explain away our *lucus a non lucendo* example:

- (87) César Chesneau Dumarsais, *Des Tropes ou Des Differens Sens dans lesquels on peut prendre un même mot dans une même langue*, 178 [1730]: *On dit encore qu'un bois sacré est apelé lucus, par antiphrase : car ces bois étoient fort sombres, & lucus vient de lucère, luire : mais si lucus vient de lucère, c'est par une raifon contraire à l'antiphrase ; car come il n'étoit pas permis par respect de couper de ces bois, ils étoient fort épais & par conséquent fort sombres, ainfi le befoin, autant que la superstition, avoit introduit l'usage d'y alumer des flambeaux.*

It is also said that a sacred grove is called *lucus* by antiphrasis: for these woods were very dark, & *lucus* comes from *lucère* 'to be bright': but, if *lucus* comes from *lucère*, it is by a reason contrary to antiphrasis; for, as, out of respect, it was not allowed to cut these woods, they were very thick and therefore very dark, for this reason necessity, as well as superstition, had introduced the usage of lighting torches there.

## 6 Decline and revival of enantiosemy

At the end of the 18th century, enantiosemy was confined to the margins of rhetoric and did not appear to have good press among etymologists. The 19th century saw a surprising revival of enantiosemy as an explanatory principle in etymology, and the question is how to account for this late development of what appears to be a highly counterintuitive way of thinking. The answer is given by Johann Arnold Kanne (1773–1824), who, in his *Prolusio Academica de Vocabulorum Enantiosemia* (1819, 7), coined the term 'enantiosemy' in reference to the etymological comparison of antonyms. As already pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, this term was deliberately chosen in contrast to the ancient term 'antiphrasis', which had a different value. The underlying idea is that there was, in the initial periods of language evolution, a semantically ambivalent stage, where opposite notions could be conveyed by one and the same word, and this assumption was part of the widespread 19th century conception according to which proto-languages are 'simpler', more 'primitive' than modern languages. We can see an illustration of this evolutionist view in a long-forgotten book by Charles Denina, *La Clef des Langues* (1804):

- (88) Charles Denina, *La Clef des Langues*, XXV [1804]: *Le langage des nations primitives ne consistant que dans un petit nombre de mots, des rapports souvent très-éloignés de la chose qu'on vouloit nommer, fuggéroient le nom avec le quel on apeloit déjà un autre objet.*

As the language of primitive nations only consists of a small number of words, relationships often very distant from the thing that had to be named suggested the name with which another object was already designated.

Denina claims that, in primitive stages of language, the same succession of sounds could be applied indistinctly to different objects. The semantic indifference that characterizes primitive languages opens the way towards a new understanding of enantiosemy as a reflex of linguistic primitivism. This view was defended by a Swiss linguist, Ludwig Tobler (1827–1895), in a paper that can be considered one of the first works of theoretical semantics:

- (89) Ludwig Tobler (1860, 360): *Schon bei der ersten Sprachbildung mochte es ferner vorkommen, daß gewisse ihrer objectiven Natur nach doppelseitige Aufschauungen sprachlich in einer und derselben Wurzel fixirt wurden, der dann also eine doppelte, fast entgegengesetzte Bedeutung zuzukommen schein. Denn daß sich die eine von diesen aus der andern erst im Verlauf entwickelt habe, ist nicht anzunehmen, wenigstens da, wo beide Bedeutungen innerhalb der sinnlichen Sphäre liegen; vielmehr entspringen beide gleichzeitig aus Einer in sich polaren Grundbedeutung, welche eben, wie ein elektromagnetisches Wesen, nur in dieser Spaltung ihre eigentliche Existenz hat.*

Already at the time of the first formation of language it could happen that some ideas which were double-sided due to their objective nature were linguistically fixed into one and the same root, which then seems to receive a double, almost opposite meaning. For it cannot be assumed that one meaning was derived from the other in the course of time, at least in the case where both meanings belong to the sensible sphere. Rather, both come simultaneously from one single, inherently polar basic meaning, which precisely, like an electromagnetic object, finds its actual existence only in this separation.

The strongest advocate of enantiosemy conceived in that sense was a German linguist, Carl Abel (1837–1906), who as late as 1884 expressed his views on the subject in a book, *Über den Gegensinn der Urworte* ('On the contrary meaning of the primitive words'). Abel claims (1884, 3) that enantiosemy belonged to the 'primitive period of the human race' (*Urzeit des Menschengeschlechts*), as mankind had difficulties expressing his thoughts distinctively. According to Abel, primitive languages did not distinguish, for example, between 'hot' and 'cold', 'good' and 'bad', and similar couples of antonyms, originally expressed by the same word. Examples of this original ambivalence are provided from Old Egyptian and Arabic as well as from various Indo-European languages (p. 41–48), e.g. Lat. *altus* 'high' and 'deep'; Lat. *calidus*, Lith. *šiltas* 'hot' and Lith. *šáltas* 'cold'; Gr. μακρός 'big'

and μικρός ‘small, little’; Lat. *malus* ‘bad’ and *melior* ‘better’; etc. Interestingly enough, some of the etymologies proposed by Abel repeat enantiosemic comparisons already made in antiquity, e.g. Lat. *siccus* ‘dry’ vs. *succus* ‘juice’ (1884, 46). Abel’s examples are semantically ambivalent either on a historical level (one attested word with two opposite meanings, like Lat. *altus*) or on a pre-historical level (two attested word with two opposite meanings allegedly going back to the same source, like Gr. μακρός/μικρός). Needless to say, the majority of Abel’s etymologies are completely fanciful and mistaken. Only very few could stand the test of time and still have a certain degree of plausibility, albeit devoid of any enantiosemic foundation.

Even linguists who were strongly marked by the evolutionist model distanced themselves from such speculations. Significantly, the great German linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), developing a classification of linguistic concepts obviously based on the Stoic theory of etymology (1° onomatopoeias, 2° symbolic metaphors, 3° analogy), deliberately ignored perception by the contrary, probably because of its unnaturalness in terms of semantic motivation (1836, 78–80).<sup>15</sup> A more direct criticism of enantiosemy was made in 1858 by Georg Curtius (1820–1885) in his *Grundzüge der griechischen Etymologie* (‘Principles of Greek etymology’). Curtius rejects the primitivist approach to Indo-European etymology (1858, 13–16):

- (90) Georg Curtius (1858, 16): *Die älteste Sprache muss einfach gewesen sein wie das Leben der Menschen, die sie redeten. Das lässt sich eben so gut behaupten wie das Gegentheil.*

The oldest language must have been as simple as the life of the people who spoke it. This assertion is just as valid as its opposite.

A few pages earlier (1858, 6, footnote), he expresses a sceptical vision of enantiosemy. The final verdict was delivered in 1897 by Michel Bréal in his epochal *Essai de sémantique*. In a discussion on semantic change, he touches upon the issue of ‘polysemy’ (*polysémie*) and refers to cases in which linguistic evolution can give rise to opposite meanings for the same word:

- (91) Michel Bréal (1897, 149): *Un vocable peut être ainsi conduit, par une série plus ou moins longue d’intermédiaires, à signifier à peu près le contraire de ce qu’il signifiait d’abord.*

A word can thus be led, through a more or less long series of intermediaries, to signify virtually the opposite of what its original meaning was.

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Lersch 1841, 51.

As an example, he mentions lat. *mātūrus* ‘early morning’ (adj.), from which a verb *mātūrāre* was derived with a meaning ‘to accelerate’, hence secondarily ‘to bring to maturity’, which provided the basis for a new meaning of *mātūrus* ‘ripe, mature’, almost completely opposite to the original meaning. What is interesting in Bréal’s example is that it is not based on any theory of enantiosemy. Cases like *mātūrus* ‘early’/‘ripe, mature, late’ are only historical accidents requiring a long evolutionary path. By no means do they reflect an all-encompassing etymological principle. In that sense, it can be argued that Bréal not only rejected the ancient *lucus a non lucendo* pattern, but also neutralized its modern outcome, all too shrouded in the mist of primitivism and linguistic evolutionism.

At the turn of the 20th century, the fate of enantiosemy seems to be sealed: whether in its traditional form or conceived of as reflective of a primitive semantic ambivalence, it seems to have been definitely consigned to the dustbin of the history of etymology. But science does not follow a neat, linear path, and the lack of communication between disciplines can result in time lag effects. In 1910, Sigmund Freud published a brief paper on enantiosemy, in the wake of Abel’s book (1884), in which the founder of psychoanalysis endeavored to show that enantiosemy is a fundamental principle of the primitive subconscious. Freud claims that there is no contradiction in the subconscious, as it appears in the universe of dream, and claims that this absence of contradiction is reflected in the language as well. He mentions some of the examples given by Abel (e.g. Lat. *altus* ‘high’ and ‘deep’, *siccus* ‘dry’ and *succus* ‘juice’) and even our *lucus a non lucendo* pattern (1910, 183). This homology between regressive stages of conscience and primitive stages of human language is a redolent blending of 19<sup>th</sup> century linguistic thought: after this last echo, the curtain falls on enantiosemy and its contradictions.

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Nathalie Rousseau

## Ὅτι ἀλαζών ἐστι μάρτυς ἡ ἐτυμολογία: Galen on Etymology, Theory and Practice

Galen of Pergamum, “the prince of medicine,”<sup>1</sup> is mostly known as the famous physician whose doctrines influenced Western medicine up to modern times. His extensive writings include major contributions on anatomy, physiology, pathology, therapeutics, prognosis and pharmacology, a great number of commentaries on Hippocrates’ works, and polemical treatises against physicians of several medical schools. But as a man of high culture educated in Asia Minor at the time of the “Second Sophistic,”<sup>2</sup> Galen has also written on philosophy, logic, and ‘grammar’ (γραμματική) —what we would call ‘literary criticism,’ or ‘philology.’<sup>3</sup>

In this respect, the list of his “Works of both linguistic and rhetorical interest,” Τὰ τοῖς γραμματικοῖς καὶ ῥήτορι κοινά, provided at the end of his bibliographic treatise *On [His] Own Books*, is impressive:

τῶν παρὰ τοῖς Ἀττικοῖς συγγραφεύσιν ὀνομάτων ὀκτὼ καὶ τεσσαράκοντα· τῶν παρ’ Εὐ-  
πόλιδι πολιτικῶν ὀνομάτων τρία· τῶν παρ’ Ἀριστοφάνει πολιτικῶν ὀνομάτων πέντε· τῶν  
παρὰ Κρατίνῳ πολιτικῶν ὀνομάτων δύο· τῶν ἰδίων κωμικῶν ὀνομάτων παραδείγματα ἕν· εἰ  
χρήσιμον ἀνάγνωσμα τοῖς παιδευομένοις ἢ παλαιὰ κωμωδία· πρὸς τοὺς ἐπιτιμώντας τοῖς  
σολοικίζουσι τῇ φωνῇ ἑπτὰ· Ἀττικῶν παράσημα ἕν· περὶ σαφηνείας καὶ ἀσαφείας· εἰ δύνανται  
τις εἶναι κριτικὸς καὶ γραμματικὸς ἕν.

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1 As expressed by the title of Mattern 2013; see also Boudon-Millot 2012. Quotations of Galen mostly follow the “List of titles and abbreviations of Galen’s works” provided by the first volume of the new series *Cambridge Galen Translations* (Galen, *Psychological Writings*, ed. P.N. Singer et al., Cambridge, 2013, 429–442), except for some widely-used titles and a few otherwise obscure abbreviations. The mention of the authoritative edition, when existing, is always accompanied by the reference to C.G. Kühn’s edition (“K”), *Claudii Galeni Opera omnia*, Leipzig: in officina libraria Car. Cnoblochii, 1821–1833, 20 volumes. Translations without a translator’s name are my own. The discussions on Arabic evidence are greatly indebted to the useful indications of Ivan Garofalo and the transliterations (following the Arabica standard), translations and detailed explanations of Robert Alessi. I am also very grateful to Amneris Roselli for her indications about the manuscript tradition of the commentary on Hippocrates’ *Joints* (see fn. 157), and to Marco Romani Mistretta for his careful revision of this text.

2 On Galen’s relation to “the so-called Second Sophistic, or, perhaps more precisely, the epideictic culture of the second century,” see von Staden 1997. On Galen’s education, see Boudon-Millot 2012, 15–47; on his culture, see Nutton 2009.

3 See e.g. Kaster 1988, 11–14; Matthaios 2015, 196–210; Wouters/Swiggers 2015.

Forty-eight volumes on *Words in Attic prose-writers*; three volumes on *Everyday words in Eupolis*; five on *Everyday words in Aristophanes*; two on *Everyday words in Cratinus*; one of *Examples of words specific to the writers of comedy*; *Whether the texts of Old Comedy are a worthwhile part of the educational curriculum*; seven volumes *Against those who criticize linguistic solecisms*; one volume on *False Attic words*; *Clarity and unclarity*; one volume on *Whether the same person can be a literary critic and a grammarian*.<sup>4</sup>

If all these treatises are now lost, Galen's "keen interest" in language<sup>5</sup> is indeed shown by the numerous remarks, throughout his writings of all kinds, on the medical words he is using.<sup>6</sup> For instance, when evoking the "opening of the stomach," τὸ τῆς γαστρὸς στόμα or τὸ στόμα τῆς κοιλίας, Galen gives details on the history of its different names (ὅπερ ὡς οἱ παλαιοὶ πάντες ὠνόμαζον καρδίαν, οὕτως οἱ νῦν ὀνομάζουσι στόμαχον "which all the Ancients called *kardia*, and those of the present time call *stomakhos*"),<sup>7</sup> mentions the support of the best authorities for the more recent one (ὁ δὲ καταχρώμενοι προσαγορεύουσι στόμαχον οὐχ οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἱατρῶν οἱ δοκιμώτατοι "which is catachrestically called *stomakhos* not only by most people, but also by the most highly esteemed physicians"),<sup>8</sup> or justifies his personal terminological choice (ὁ καταχρώμενοι πολλάκις ὀνομάζουσι στόμαχον, ὥσπερ ἀμέλει καὶ νῦν ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ λόγῳ χρώμεθα τῇ προσηγορίᾳ βραχυλογίας ἔνεκεν "which is often catachrestically called *stomakhos*—just as, indeed, what we will now call it in the whole book, using this name for the sake of brevity").<sup>9</sup>

Another instructive example is given by the famous passage of the second book of the *Therapeutic Method*,<sup>10</sup> where Galen provides an in-depth analysis of the different ways in which disease names were built:

<sup>4</sup> *Lib. Prop.* 20.1–2 (19.48 K), ed. V. Boudon-Millot, Paris, 2007 (CUF 450); transl. (modified) P.N. Singer, Oxford/New York, 1997 (on the meaning of πολιτικά [ὀνόματα] and παράσημα, see Boudon-Millot, fn. *ad loc.*). For a more literal translation of Τὰ τοῖς γραμματικοῖς καὶ ῥήτορσι κοινά, "Works common to grammarians and rhetoricians," see *infra* § 2.3 and fn. 100.

<sup>5</sup> As worded by von Staden 1997, 53.

<sup>6</sup> See especially Skoda 2001 and 2006.

<sup>7</sup> *Loc. Aff.* 5.6 (8.339 K).

<sup>8</sup> *Loc. Aff.* 2.9.16 (8.119 K), ed. F. Gärtner, Berlin (CMG V 6, 1, 1), 2015. From my point of view, the translation 'erroneously' of R.E. Siegel (Basel [etc.], 1976), as well as Gärtner's 'fälschlicherweise,' do not adequately render Galen's views on 'catachrestic' or 'improper' use of words, on which see Rousseau 2017b.

<sup>9</sup> *Cur. Rat. Ven. Sect.* 1 (11.251 K). The translation 'miscalled' of P. Brain (Cambridge/London [etc.], 1986) is equally misleading (see previous fn.).

<sup>10</sup> On the possible translations of the title of this treatise, see the Introduction (vol. 1, CXII) of I. Johnston & G.H.R. Horsley's translation, Cambridge Mass./London (LCL 516–518), 2011.



So, having established these definitions, it is necessary to look closely and precisely at the inconsistency of the names which those who first applied them assigned to diseases (τὴν ἀνωμαλίαν τῶν ὀνομάτων, ἃ κατὰ τῶν νοσημάτων ἐπήνεγκαν οἱ πρῶτοι θέμενοι). Very often, they derived the names from the damaged part (πολλαχόθι μὲν γὰρ ἀπὸ τοῦ βεβλαμμένου μορίου τὰ ὀνόματα): pleuritis (πλευρίτις), peripneumonia (περιπνευμονία), sciatica (ισχιάς)<sup>11</sup> [...], ophthalmia (ὀφθαλμία), headache (κεφαλαλγία) [...]; very often from the symptom (πολλαχόθι δ' ἀπὸ τοῦ συμπτώματος): [...] spasm (σπασμός), palpitation (παλμός), tremor (τρόμος), paralysis (παράλυσις), arpsia (ἀρπεία), dyspnea (δύσπνοια) [...]; very often from both simultaneously (πολλαχόθι δ' ἀπ' ἀμφοῖν ἅμα): cephalalgia (κεφαλαλγία), otalgia (ὠταλγία), cardialgia (καρδιαλγία), odontalgia (ὀδονταλγία) and hysteralgia (ὕστεραλγία); and very often from what was thought to be the cause (πολλαχόθι δ' ἀπὸ τῆς δοξαζομένης αἰτίας), such as what was called 'melancholia' (μελαγχολία) [...]. Sometimes they were named from their similarity to external things in some respect, like elephas (ἐλέφας), cancer (καρκίνος), polyp (πολύπους) [...].

Names of the diseases themselves which have no connection to the affected place or to the effecting cause (μήτε τόπου ἐφαπτόμενα πεπονθότος μήτε τῆς ποιούσης αἰτίας) are few: inflammation (φλεγμονή), gangrene (γάγγραινα), induration (σκίρρος), erysipelas (ἐρυσίπελας), abscess (ἀπόστημα), edema (οἴδημα) [...]. Some [are named] from those who first cured them (ἀπὸ τῶν πρῶτως ἰασαμένων), like chironium (χειρώνειον), some from those who were affected (ἀπὸ τῶν πεπονθότων), like telephium (τηλέφειον), while cancer (καρκίνος) gets its name from the similarity to the animal. Phagedaena (φαγέδαινα), however, [takes its name] from the symptom, just as herpetic [ulcers] (ἔρπητες) also do. But phagedaena is, in general, an ulcer that eats away or erodes, or whatever someone might wish to term it (ἢ ὅπως ἂν ἐθέλῃ τις ὀνομάζειν). Herpes<sup>12</sup> is not always an ulceration, although whenever it is accompanied by ulceration, it does not occupy its original position, but feeds on the neighboring area like a crawling beast, as the name makes clear (ὥσπερ τοῦνομα δηλοῖ), leaving its former position to spread to other [places].<sup>13</sup>

Somewhat surprisingly, however, Galen appears as a sharp critic of etymology, calling it ἀλαζών 'charlatan, impostor (subst.); vain, deceptive (adj.),' which is, since the classical period, a very negatively connoted term, used of people or things, often associated in texts with ψευδής 'false, deceptive,' and set against σοφός 'wise, sensible:' in the treatise *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, he argues that he has "shown in another work, *On the Correctness of Names* (Περὶ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος),<sup>14</sup> that etymology is an impostor, often testifying equally

<sup>11</sup> Or perhaps more accurately 'hip ache:' see Grmek 1983, 19.

<sup>12</sup> Perhaps a kind of serpentine ulcer: see Grmek 1983, 221–222, fn. 56.

<sup>13</sup> *Meth. Med.* 2.2 (10.81–84 K), transl. I. Johnston & G.H.R. Horsley [see fn. 10]. On the precursory character of this reflection on the building of disease names, see Skoda 1988, 185–187.

<sup>14</sup> Throughout this paper, in order to keep with the traditional translation of this title (and of that of Περὶ τῶν ἱατρικῶν ὀνομάτων, *On Medical Names*: see *infra* § 2.3 and fn. 108–109; and also fn. 55 and 113), I translate ὀνόματα by 'names,' although the semantic field of ὄνομα also overlaps

for those who speak the reverse of the truth, and not infrequently giving greater support to speakers of falsehoods than of truths” (ὅτι μὲν ἀλαζών ἐστι μάρτυς ἢ ἐτυμολογία πολλάκις μὲν ὁμοίως μαρτυροῦσα τοῖς τάναντία λέγουσι τῶν ἀληθῶν, οὐκ ὀλιγάκις δὲ τοῖς ψευδομένοις μᾶλλον ἤπερ τοῖς ἀληθεύουσιν).<sup>15</sup>

At first glance, this obvious gap between Galen’s tough statements on etymology and the numerous explanations of words one can find in his writings is striking.<sup>16</sup> If his explanations of words according to their constituents belong to the practice of etymology,<sup>17</sup> Galen seems to act differently from what he advocates. This possibility should not be excluded: assertions occurring in different treatises, written separately at different times with different targets, and without aiming at theoretical systematization, do not necessarily need to be exactly consistent. However, two other accounts of this gap can also be put forward: either Galen does not consider his own explanations as ‘etymological,’ or his emphatic blame of etymology does not pertain to all etymological explanations.<sup>18</sup>

Hence, since the conclusions may be quite different according to the way etymology is meant, and Galen does not give any explicit definition of etymology, this essay aims at shedding further light on Galen’s ideas by presenting a comprehensive overview of his utterances on this subject and paying special attention, beyond the theory—what Galen says on etymology, which inevitably has a strong axiological dimension—, to his practice—the very examples he associates with it. Besides the well-known passages of the treatise *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, I will also focus on the other texts mentioning etymology.

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with that of Engl. *word* (as exemplified, e.g., by the traditional translations of the titles of his “Works of both linguistic and rhetorical interest” quoted *supra*: *Words in Attic prose-writers...*); see e.g. Morison 2008, 155, fn. 9.

**15** *Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 2.2.7 (5.214 K), ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy, Berlin (CMG V 4, 1, 2), 1978–1984 (reissue with addenda et corrigenda 2005).

**16** See in particular the remarks of Hankinson 1994, 170–175; 179 (“here Galen does not, apparently, think etymology a fool’s guide:” see *infra* fn. 183); Manetti 2003, 202–215, esp. 203 and 211–212.

**17** Which is at least the case from a modern point of view, according to a “minimal definition,” such as the one given by P. Swiggers (1991, 29): “L’intérêt des étymologistes se porte vers l’*origine des mots* et il s’agit d’en chercher une motivation par *correspondance* (ou mise en corrélation).”

**18** This problem is discussed by Manetti (2003, 211), who considers, following Varron, the possibility of different kinds of etymology: see *infra* § 3.2 and fn. 186–187.

Such a study seems all the more necessary since the occurrences of the word ἐτυμολογία and its derivatives<sup>19</sup> are remarkably few (17),<sup>20</sup> compared to the 4000 occurrences of verbal and nominal forms of the verb καλῶ ‘to call,’ nearly as many of ὀνομάζω ‘to name,’ almost 1500 of ὄνομα ‘name,’ in addition to other less frequent terms like προσαγορεύω ‘to name’ or προσηγορία ‘name.’ In addition to this, the analysis of the equally few (12) occurrences of the phrase ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης ‘correctness of names,’ which is closely associated by Galen with ἐτυμολογία, in keeping with the tradition, will give a more precise idea of the scope and content of the lost treatise in which Galen claims to have dealt with the subject of etymology.

## 1 Galen’s ‘blame’ of etymology in polemical contexts

### 1.1 In the treatise *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*

Two-thirds of Galen’s mentions of etymology appear in four passages of books 2 and 3 of the *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*. In this treatise demonstrating that the main doctrines of these two authorities are correct and in mutual agreement, the second and third books are specifically devoted to the question of “the powers that govern us, their number, the nature of each, and the place that each occupies in the body”.<sup>21</sup> Against the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus supporting an “unitarian” “conception of the soul” which posits that “adult humans” are “characterized by the possession of one homogeneously rational mind, located in the heart,” Galen holds that according to the Platonic tripartition of the soul, the three faculties (reason, anger and desire) are located in the brain, the heart and the liver respectively.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> According to the data provided by Gippert 1997 *ad loc.* On the possible but not assured presence of the word or its derivatives in the two treatises *On Examining the Best Physicians* (on whose title see Nutton 1990, 239–240) and *On Medical Names*, only preserved in Arabic translations, even if their modern translations display the word Engl. *etymology*/Germ. *Etymologie*, see Alessi/Rousseau (forthcoming) and *infra* § 1.2 and fn. 55; § 2.2 and fn. 98; Conclusion and fn. 190. <sup>20</sup> This fact, to my knowledge, has not yet been pointed out.

<sup>21</sup> Τὰ περὶ τῶν διοικουσῶν ἡμᾶς δυνάμεων ὅποσαι τέ εἰσι τὸν ἀριθμὸν ὅποια τέ τις ἐκάστη καὶ τόπον ὄντιν’ ἐν τῷ ζῳῳ κατέλιπεν (*Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 2.1.1 [5.211 K], ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15]).

<sup>22</sup> See Tieleman 1996 (quotation p. xxiv).

Thus the condemnation of etymology takes place in a polemical context: in order to refute Chrysippus' thesis, Galen argues that his demonstration does not rest on a solid basis. At the very beginning of book 2, having referred to his own treatise *On Demonstration* (Περὶ ἀποδείξεως)<sup>23</sup> for a detailed analysis of “inappropriate premises” (τὰ οὐκ οἰκεῖα τῶν λημμάτων), Galen includes etymology in a larger list of the premises set forth by Chrysippus that have no place in a scientific (ἐπιστημονική)<sup>24</sup> demonstration:

(The old philosophers Theophrastus and Aristotle) would be ashamed to employ for scientific demonstrations (εἰς ἀποδείξεις ἐπιστημονικάς) the inexperienced and rhetorical premises (τὰ γὰρ ἰδιωτικά τε καὶ ῥητορικά λήμματα) with which the volumes of Chrysippus are filled. Chrysippus sometimes calls on non-experts as witnesses to the premises that he postulates; sometimes he calls on poets, or the great etymology (τὴν βελτίστην ἐτυμολογίαν),<sup>25</sup> or something else of the sort, things that prove nothing but spend and waste our time to no purpose, as we make this one point clear to them, that the premises of the syllogism<sup>26</sup> are not scientific, and then descend into the arena and wrestle with them in order to demonstrate that the non-experts and the poets testify for us no less, and sometimes even more, than for them. And similarly, when we enjoy greater leisure, we prove<sup>27</sup> to them that etymology testifies no more for them than for us. Indeed I have shown in another work, *On the*

**23** Whose 15 books are now lost, except some fragments: see De Lacy [see fn. 15], *Comm. ad loc.*; Gal., *Ord. Lib. Prop.* 1.12 (19.53 K) and *Lib. Prop.* 14.8 (19.41 K), ed. V. Boudon-Millot [see fn. 4], fn. *ad loc.*

**24** I.e. ‘pertaining to ἐπιστήμη.’ In the translations quoted here, I use either of the two possible translations of this word, ‘science’ or ‘knowledge,’ according to the choice of the translator.

**25** De Lacy’s translation “etymology, that fine friend” seems to be influenced by the ironical use of the vocative βέλτιστε/βέλτιστοι “you, excellent (man/men),” already common in the classical period (in Galen, see, e.g., *Diff. Puls.* 2.10 [8.631 K]; 3.4 [8.666 K]; *Meth. Med.* 6.6 [10.452 K]). But other usages are also known: e.g., when Galen, in *Meth. Med.* 1.7 (10.63 K), ironically speaks of “the excellent methodists,” οἱ βέλτιστοι [...] μεθοδικοί, who “are mistaken” (σφάλλονται), like many others, about the method of medicine, the criticism is addressed to the proficiency of these physicians.

**26** Viz. ‘of the conclusion of the syllogism (συμπέρασμα).’

**27** De Lacy’s translation “when we enjoy greater leisure, we shall prove to them that etymology testifies no more for them than for us” does not render the present indicative ἐπιδείκνυμεν, which is nevertheless of particular significance in the passage. Galen mentions the various ways in which his time is being wasted because of Chrysippus: either he makes “this one point” (αὐτὸ τοῦτο μόνον) clear, that the premises set forth by Chrysippus are not scientific, or he stoops to “descend” (συγκαταβαίνειν) to demonstrate how the testimonies of non-experts and poets can be interpreted, or “even” (Οὐτῶν δὲ καί), “when [he] enjoy[s] greater leisure” (ἐπειδὴν ἄγωμεν μακροτέραν σχολήν), he does the same with etymology. As shown by the temporal clause with ἄν and the subjunctive, along with a leading verb in the present indicative, characteristic of generic

*Correctness of Names*, that etymology is an impostor, often testifying equally for those who speak the reverse of the truth, and not infrequently giving greater support to speakers of falsehoods than of truths. In that work I showed further that concerning the word *egō* (‘I’) Chrysippus etymologized miserably (ἐνθα καὶ περὶ τῆς ἐγὼ φωνῆς ἐπέδειξα τὸν Χρύσιππον ἐτυμολογοῦντα μοχθηρῶς).<sup>28</sup> Why then should I again expound at length the same matters here?<sup>29</sup>

In addition to the negative word ἀλαζών, the ironical use of the epithet βελτίστη ‘the best, excellent’ contributes to the belittlement of etymology. This impression is reinforced by the treatment of the list of inappropriate premises in which it is included. Not content with assigning them to a “third-class” rank (τοῦ τρίτου γένους ἔσται ταῦτα) because they “are twice removed from the scientific” (διττὴν μὲν ἀπόστασιν ἀφεστῶτα τῶν ἐπιστημονικῶν) and “differ by no great amount from sophistical premises” (οὐ πολλῷ δέ τι διὰφέροντα τῶν σοφιστικῶν),<sup>30</sup> Galen makes constant changes throughout the second and third books of the treatise in the number and the order of the constituents of this list. This gives the impression that the heterogeneous items he accumulates are all interchangeable and equally nugatory:

ὅσα δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων δοξῶν εἴτ’ οὖν ἰδιωτῶν εἴτε ποιητῶν εἴτε φιλοσόφων εἴτε ἐξ ἐτυμολογίας τινὸς εἴτε ἐκ νευμάτων, εἴτε ἐξ ἐπινευμάτων ἢ ἀνανευμάτων, εἴτε ἐξ ὁτουδή-  
τινος ἑτέρου τοιοῦτου λαμβάνεται λήμματα, τοῦ τρίτου γένους ἔσται ταῦτα.

And all premises that are taken from men’s opinions, whether those of non-experts or poets or philosophers, or from some etymology, or from nods, whether of assent or dissent, or from anything else of that kind, will belong to the third class.<sup>31</sup>

τὰ δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς θέσεως ἐπικεχειρημένα καὶ τούτων ὅσα μᾶλλον ποιηταὶ μαρτυροῦσιν ἢ οἱ πολ-  
λοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἡ ἐτυμολογία τις ἢ τι τοιοῦτον ἕτερον, οὐκ ὀρθῶς.

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sentences, Galen sees this last demonstration as a “repeated or customary action” (Smyth/ Messing 1956, 545–546 § 2409–2410), rather than as a future goal—besides, the next sentence confirms that he has already written a work on the subject.

**28** “Etymologized miserably” aims at a more literal rendering of the participle ἐτυμολογοῦντα than De Lacy’s translation “I showed further that Chrysippus gave a faulty etymology of the word *egō*.”

**29** *Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 2.2.5–8 (5.213–214 K), ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15], slightly modified (see fn. 25; 27–28).

**30** *Ibid.* 2.4.4 (5.227–228 K), ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15]. On the “four kinds of premises” differentiated by Galen, see Tieleman 1996, 12–23.

**31** *Ibid.* 2.4.4 (5.227 K), ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15].

But what he said about arguments from position, and about those among them that rest for the greater part on the evidence of poets, or the majority of mankind, or an etymology, or something else of that kind, was not correct.<sup>32</sup>

ἐν ᾧ βιβλίῳ πάντας ἔδοξέ μοι κάλλιον εἶναι παραθέσθαι τοὺς λόγους οἳ τὸ πιθανὸν ἔχουσι καὶ οὐχὶ ἀπόβλητοι τελέως εἰσὶν οὐδὲ γυναῖκας οὐδὲ ἰδιώτας οὐδὲ ἐτυμολογίας ἢ φορὰς χειρῶν ἢ ἐπινεύσεις ἢ ἀνανεύσεις κεφαλῆς ἢ ποιητὰς ἐπικαλοῦνται μάρτυρας.

It seemed better to me to present in that (second) book all the arguments that have plausibility and are not completely worthless and do not invoke the testimony of women, non-experts, etymologies, motions of the hands, upward or downward movement of the head, or poets.<sup>33</sup>

εἰ ταύτην τὴν ὁδὸν ὁ Χρύσιππος ἐτράπετο παρελθὼν τὴν κατὰ τοὺς μύθους τε καὶ τὰς ἐτυμολογίας ἀνανεύσεις τε καὶ κατανεύσεις κεφαλῆς καὶ χειρῶν κινήσεις καὶ χειλῶν σχήματα καὶ ποιητῶν μαρτυρίας ἅμα γυναῖξι καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἰδιώταις, αὐτὸς ἂν εὗρισκε τάληθές ἡμῶν τε τὸν χρόνον οὐκ ἂν ἀπώλλυεν ἐπιδεικνύντων αὐτῷ μηδὲ ἐν οἷς ἐπικαλεῖται μάρτυσι μηδὲ ἐν τούτοις τι πλεόν ἔχοντι. καὶ γὰρ οἱ ποιηταὶ τὰ πλείω κατὰ τῶν δογμάτων αὐτοῦ λέγουσι καὶ οἱ μῦθοι καὶ οἱ ἰδιῶται καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἕκαστος, οὓς ὥς ἑαυτῷ μαρτυροῦντας ἐν τῷ πρότερω Περὶ ψυχῆς ἔγραψε.

If Chrysippus had followed this course and had disregarded the way of myths and etymologies, noddings of the head up and down, movements of the hands, positions of the lips, and the testimony of poets, women, and other non-experts, he would himself have found the truth and would not have caused us to waste our time pointing out to him that he gains nothing either from the witnesses he calls or from these other things. For the poets and the myths and the non-experts, and all the others whom he quoted as witnesses on his own behalf in his first book *On the Soul*, speak for the most part against his doctrines.<sup>34</sup>

If this inclusion of etymology into the list of inappropriate premises conduces to its belittlement, it also shows that Galen's criticism is not specifically addressed to it. Moreover, the fact that etymology is called a (worthless) "witness" is not relevant, as there is an extended metaphor of a trial in which Chrysippus "calls on" a variety of premises to argue the case of his theory on the soul. There is therefore little information on how etymology is meant.

Only two concrete examples are provided. The first appears at the beginning of book 2, where Galen argues that he has shown in his work *On the Correctness of Names* that "concerning the word *egō* ('I') Chrysippus etymologized miserably." While claiming to be reluctant to "expound again at length" what is already

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* 2.5.95–96 (5.262 K), ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15].

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* 3.5.22 (5.327 K), ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15].

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* 3.8.36–37 (5.358 K), ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15], slightly modified ("friendly witnesses" being replaced by "witnesses on his own behalf").

written elsewhere, he nevertheless quotes “Chrysippus’ remarks on the word *egō* in his first book *On the Soul* (Περὶ ψυχῆς), where he is discussing the governing part of the soul (τὸ ἡγεμονικόν),”<sup>35</sup> and then makes the following comments:

Throughout this whole passage Chrysippus employs no scientific premise (οὐδὲν ἐπιστημονικὸν λήμμα) for proving that the ruling part of the soul is in the heart, but he brings together two premises not appropriate (δύο οὐκ οἰκεῖα) to the problem at hand. One is from etymology, that in uttering the word *egō* (‘I’) we somehow draw the mouth and jaw downward as though toward the chest when we pronounce the first syllable, *e* (τὸ μὲν ἕτερον ἀπὸ τῆς ἐτυμολογίας, ὅτι τὴν ἐγὼ φωνὴν φθεγγόμενοι κατὰ τὴν πρώτην συλλαβὴν τὴν ε λεγομένην τὸ στόμα κάτω που καὶ τὴν γένυν ἀπάγομεν ὡς ἐπὶ τὰ στήρνα); the other is that we sometimes bring the hand also to the chest and point to ourselves as we say, “This suits me” (ἐμοὶ τοῦτο προσήκει), “This I say to you” (τοῦτο ἐγὼ σοι λέγω). He completely forgot that it also happens that men often touch their noses when they say “Give me this,” “This suits me,” “This I say to you.” And yet when arguing from the word *egō* (‘I’) he did not forget that *ekeinos* (ἐκεῖνος) [‘he’] begins not with some similar syllable, but with exactly the same syllable, *e*. But just as he mentioned the difficulty in the case of the word but did not resolve it, so also, I think, along with the gesture of pointing to one’s chest, he should have mentioned the movement of the finger to the nose, and there too the difficulty would not be resolved, unless indeed a person believes that Chrysippus’ mere statement (ἀπόφασις), alone and by itself, is scientific proof (ἀπόδειξις).<sup>36</sup>

At first glance, the difference between the two inappropriate premises may not seem obvious, as they both imply a gesture. However, the etymological explanation is characterized by an analysis of the word *ἐγὼ* (the downward movement of mouth and jaw is supposed, according to Chrysippus, to explain the first syllable of this word), whereas the gesture accompanying the utterance of the word is supposed to explain it as a whole.

This analysis implied by etymology is highlighted further on in a strong refutation of these two premises:

This is his resolution: having said that in the word *egō* (‘I’) the second syllable, *gō*, gives no indication of distance, he added that the *kei* in *ekeinos* (‘he’) does. This is mere assertion with no demonstration, much less a secure and scientific (demonstration); indeed it does not even advance so far as rhetorical or sophistical plausibility (μηδ’ ἄχρι πιθανότητος ἢ ῥητορικῆς ἢ σοφιστικῆς προοιῶσα). Should he not have added some demonstration why the syllable *kei* indicates separation and *gō* does not?<sup>37</sup>

35 *Ibid.* 2.2.9 (5.215 K), ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15].

36 *Ibid.* 2.2.12–14 (5.215–216 K), ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15].

37 *Ibid.* 2.2.17–19 (5.217 K), ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15]. The second premise is then refuted as follows: “Again, why is it that when we bring the finger to the chest we imply that the

Furthermore, the second and last illustration of etymology in the *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* does not imply any gesture, but only brings together two words by means of the substitution and transposition of letters:<sup>38</sup>

ὅμοια δὲ τοῖς τοιοῦτοις ἐπιχειρήμασι καὶ τὰ κατὰ τὴν ἐτυμολογίαν εἰσὶ τοῦ τῆς καρδίας ὀνόματος ἐξῆς τῶν προειρημένων ὑπὸ τοῦ Χρυσίππου γεγραμμένα κατὰ τὸ πρῶτον Περὶ ψυχῆς ὧδὲ πως ἔχοντα· τούτοις πᾶσι συμφώνως καὶ τοῦνομα τοῦτ' ἔσχηκεν ἡ καρδία κατὰ τινὰ κράτησιν καὶ κυρείαν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐν αὐτῇ εἶναι τὸ κυριεῦον καὶ κρατοῦν τῆς ψυχῆς μέρος, ὡς ἂν κρατία λεγομένη.

In the same class with these arguments is that from the etymology of the word *kardia* ('heart'), which comes next in Chrysippus' first book *On the Soul*. It is as follows: "Concordant with all this, the heart got its name by virtue of a certain power and sovereignty, from the fact that the sovereign and ruling part of the soul is in it; it is called, as it were, *kratia* ('power')." <sup>39</sup>

In this case, however, Galen does not pronounce judgment on the validity of Chrysippus' demonstration.<sup>40</sup>

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rule of the soul is located there, but when we bring it to the nose we do not? If the act of pointing is sufficient evidence for discovering a governing part of the soul, it is not right that it be sufficient in the case of the chest but inadequate in the case of the nose. [...] And why is it that when we nod the head in assent we indicate that the rule of the soul is rather that member toward which we move the head, and not in the member which is moved? For surely it is more plausible that the member in us which is first moved when we nod is itself the ruling part of the soul, rather than any of the other (members) toward which its motion carries it" (*ibid.* 2.2.19–22 [5.217–218 K], ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15]).

**38** On the four categories of changes, addition (πρόσθεσις), subtraction (ἀφαίρεσις), transposition (μετάθεσις) or substitution (ἐναλλαγή) of letters or syllables which enable a "phonetic bridging" between two words, characteristic of Stoic etymological practice but "remain[ing] important instruments of etymologists throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages," see Lallot 1991, 142–144; Sluiter 2015, 915–917 (quotations p. 917), with relevant bibliography.

**39** *Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 3.5.27–29 (5.328 K), ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15].

**40** Indeed, Galen's following observations are only dealing with Chrysippus' conclusion (the sovereignty of the heart), and not with his explanation of the word καρδία: "We do not deny, noble Chrysippus, that so far as our life is concerned it is the sovereign organ, but we do not agree that it is sovereign in every way. For nature did not assign to it the government and rule of the rest, at least when a man's affairs are well ordered; rather, it assigned rule to the brain and obedience to the heart, as we are demonstrating" (*ibid.* 3.5.29–30 [5.328–329 K], ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15]). Therefore, one cannot agree with B. Morison 2008, 129 ("Galen seems to say that the word '*kardia*' is etymologically appropriate for the heart, and that Chrysippus has failed to see exactly how"); as a matter of fact, following Galen's line of reasoning, one would instead conclude that Chrysippus' etymology testifies "for those who speak the reverse of the truth," as



Two conclusions arise from this survey of the mentions of etymology in the *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*. First, Galen does not blame etymology as such, but the use of it as a premise within scientific research; indeed, stating that “Chrysippus etymologized miserably” (τὸν Χρύσιππον ἐτυμολογοῦντα μοχθηρῶς)<sup>41</sup> leaves the possibility of a good way of etymologizing— unless this statement ought to be interpreted only as a masterful demonstration of Galen’s refutation skills, given that, throughout the treatise, he not only denies the validity of Chrysippus’ arguments, but also likes to beat him with his own weapons. Nor does Galen hesitate to point out that Chrysippus’ arguments plead for the opposite cause,<sup>42</sup> or that he speaks the truth using false arguments.<sup>43</sup>

A second important point, hitherto unnoticed, is that in this treatise, Galen does not necessarily endorse the use of the very word ἐτυμολογία. Actually, this word may well have been taken over by Galen from Chrysippus in referring to his own practice. Besides being mentioned in lists of the Stoic philosopher’s premises, the term is indeed only associated with Chrysippus’ explanations of two

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stated at the beginning of book 2, since the heart is not exactly sovereign. But Galen, at any rate, does not comment on this point.

41 *Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 2.2.7–8 (5.214 K); see *supra* and fn. 28.

42 E.g. “And similarly, when we enjoy greater leisure, we prove to them that etymology testifies no more for them (the non-experts called on by Chrysippus as witnesses) than for us” (*Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 2.2.6–7 [5.214 K]; see *supra* and fn. 27); “for the poets and the myths and the non-experts, and all the others whom he quoted as witnesses on his own behalf in his first book *On the Soul*, speak for the most part against his doctrines” (*ibid.* 3.8.37 [5.358 K]; see *supra* and fn. 34). Correspondingly, for example, in order to refute Chrysippus’ arguments pertaining to the gestures that may accompany the word *egō*, Galen points out that the Stoic philosopher “completely forgot that it also happens that men often touch their noses when they say ‘Give me this,’ ‘This suits me,’ ‘This I say to you’” (*ibid.* 2.2.13 [5.216 K]; see *supra* and fn. 36), and that nodding towards the chest demonstrates instead that the head, being at the origin of the movement, “is itself the ruling part of the soul” (2.2.21–22 [5.218 K]; see *supra* and fn. 37). See also *ibid.* 3.5.23 (5.327 K), ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15]: “the things (he says) not only fail to advance the argument but even conflict with Stoic doctrines.”

43 “Now Chrysippus was correct in saying this, and therefore one might blame him the more, because even though he sees the truth he does not use it; but what he said about arguments from position, and about those among them that rest for the greater part on the evidence of poets, or the majority of mankind, or an etymology, or something else of that kind, was not correct. [...] It is as if he had spoken the truth not from knowledge but by chance (ὥσπερ οὐ κατ’ ἐπιστήμην, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τύχην εἰρηκῶς τὸ ἀληθές)” (*ibid.* 2.5.95–97 [5.261–262 K], ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15]).

words, the first of which appears in his work precisely entitled *On Etymologies*.<sup>44</sup> This is shown by the passage immediately preceding the mention of the etymology of καρδία:

I therefore pass now to the things that follow the discussion of speech in Chrysippus' treatise: the arguments from the movements of the hands when we point to ourselves by touching our chests, and those from the word *egō* ('I'), point that he also mentioned in his work *On Etymologies* (ἔστι δὲ τὰ τε κατὰ τὰς φοράς τῶν χειρῶν, ὅταν ἐφαπτόμεθα τῶν στέρνων ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς δεικνύντες, ἔτι τε τὰ κατὰ τὴν ἐγὼ φωνήν, ἃ δὴ κἀν τοῖς Ἑτυμολογικοῖς εἶπεν), claiming that the word possesses a certain deictic character from our appearance when we say it, because as we pronounce its first syllable our lower jaw and lip are drawn away, as though to the chest. But I have already discussed these (things) also in the second book of this work and in my treatise *On the Correctness of Names* (κατὰ τὸ δεύτερον τῶνδε τῶν ὑπομνημάτων κἀν τοῖς Περὶ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος).<sup>45</sup>

## 1.2 In the treatise *On the Differences of Fevers*

Among the very few (i.e., five) mentions of “etymology” occurring in other treatises, the one involving Prodicus' interpretation of φλέγμα ‘phlegm’<sup>46</sup> also appears within a polemical context, in a treatise handling the question of the differentiation of fevers.<sup>47</sup> In a short digression prompted by the mention of the adjective φλεγματώδης ‘phlegmatic,’ Galen blames Prodicus for having preferred etymology to adopting the common use of the word φλέγμα:

<sup>44</sup> Ἑτυμολογικά precisely means ‘Etymological (Books):’ on how adjectives in -ικό/-ιακό- acquire, by substantivization, the meaning ‘(work, book, treatise) pertaining to,’ see Rousseau (in press a), § “2. Θηριακά.”

<sup>45</sup> *Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 3.5.24–27 (5.327–328 K), ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15], slightly modified (“and from the word *egō*, points that he also mentioned...” being replaced by “and those from the word *egō*, point that he also mentioned...:” in the Greek text, ἔτι and δὴ more probably suggest that the relative clause ἃ δὴ κἀν τοῖς Ἑτυμολογικοῖς εἶπεν only refer to the second category of arguments, τὰ κατὰ τὴν ἐγὼ φωνήν; moreover, this interpretation is better suited to Galen's distinction of two different categories of inappropriate premises at the beginning of book 2 [see *supra* and n. 36]).

<sup>46</sup> On the four last occurrences, see *infra* § 3.1.

<sup>47</sup> On διαφορά/διαφοραί, “a common term meaning ‘difference’ generally,” but also having “the meaning it carries in logic and taxonomy,” especially in several Galenic titles, see the Introduction of I. Johnston's collection of translations entitled “Galen, *On Diseases and Symptoms*,” Cambridge, 2006, 41–42; and *infra* § 2.4 and n. 143, 147 and 149 on Galen's own definition in the *Differences of Pulses*.

ὅς γάρ ἂν ὑγρὸς ἅμα καὶ ψυχρὸς ἢ χυμὸς, ὑπὸ τὴν τοῦ φλέγματος ἀνάγεται προσηγορίαν, εἴ τις Ἱπποκρατεῖως τε καὶ συνήθως ἅπασιν, οὐ μόνον τοῖς παλαιοῖς ἰατροῖς, ἀλλὰ ἤδη καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις Ἑλλησιν ὀνομάζειν ἐθέλει. Πρόδικος γάρ ἐν τῷ Περὶ φύσεως ἀνθρώπου παρανομεῖ καὶ περὶ τοῦτο τοῦνομα, πρὸς τῆς θαυμαστῆς ἔτυμολογίας ἀναπειθόμενος, ἀλλ’ οὐ νῦν καιρὸς ἐπὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα τὸν λόγον ἐκτρέπειν, ἄλλην αὐτοῖς πραγματεῖαν ἀνατεθεικότα.

The humor which is both wet and cold comes under the name of *phlegma*, if one wishes to name in accordance with Hippocrates and with the usage that is common to all, not only to ancient physicians but also to the other Greeks. Prodicus indeed, in his treatise *On the Nature of Man*, contravenes the law also regarding this word,<sup>48</sup> as he is convinced by the amazing etymology. But it is not the right time to divert the discussion to such subjects, having dedicated another treatise to these questions.<sup>49</sup>

If the etymology to which Prodicus conforms is not explained here, it is however well known by Galen’s readers, as three other treatises convene Prodicus on this very topic.<sup>50</sup> In the second book of the *Natural Faculties* and in the eighth book of the *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, the sophist is blamed for understanding φλέγμα in an unusual way, associating it with πεφλέχθαι, perfect passive infinitive of φλέγω ‘to burn,’ rather than complying with common usage:

Πρόδικος δ’ ἐν τῷ Περὶ φύσεως ἀνθρώπου γράμματι τὸ συγκεκαυμένον καὶ οἷον ὑπερωπτημένον ἐν τοῖς χυμοῖς ὀνομάζων φλέγμα παρὰ τὸ πεφλέχθαι τῇ λέξει μὲν ἑτέρως χρῆται, φυλάττει μέντοι τὸ πρᾶγμα κατὰ ταῦτ’ οἱ ἄλλοις. τὴν δ’ ἐν τοῖς ὀνόμασι τάνδρος τούτου καινοτομίαν ἱκανῶς ἐνδείκνυται καὶ Πλάτων. ἀλλὰ τοῦτό γε τὸ πρὸς ἀπάντων ἀνθρώπων ὀνομαζόμενον φλέγμα τὸ λευκὸν τὴν χροάν, ὃ βλένναν ὀνομάζει Πρόδικος, ὁ ψυχρὸς καὶ ὑγρὸς χυμὸς ἐστὶν οὗτος.

<sup>48</sup> The verb παρανομεῖν ‘contravene the law,’ rarely found in Galenic texts, almost always refers to the violation of Greek usage.

<sup>49</sup> *Diff. Feb.* 2.6 (7.347–348 K). Galen, unfortunately, does not mention the title of this treatise. It could presumably be the *Correctness of Names* (handling the question of etymology: see § 2), or perhaps the *Medical Names* (mentioning Prodicus’ interpretation of the word φλέγμα: see *infra* and fn. 55).

<sup>50</sup> Thus 4 out of 8 passages mentioning Prodicus deal with his unorthodox interpretation of φλέγμα, which is the only concrete analysis ascribed by Galen to the famous sophist (see Manetti 2003, 202 fn. 82). Among the 4 other passages, 2 also deal with language: in the commentary *In Hipp. Art.* 4.15 (18a.685–686 K), Prodicus is evoked as the paragon of μικρολογία ‘quibbling, hairsplitting,’ whereas in the commentary *In Hipp. Prog.* 1.4 (18b.15 K), Galen recommends to “hold off from excessive elaboration of meanings and to avoid it (τὰς δ’ ἐν τοῖς σημαινόμενοις περιεργείας ἀποτρέπεσθαι τε καὶ φεύγειν): in being passionate about this, so great a sophist as Prodicus became a nuisance for his pupils and was continually mocked by Plato’s Socrates, although being otherwise praised.” On this “distinction of names” (διαίρεσις τῶν ὀνομάτων) presented by Plato as the characteristic activity of Prodicus, see Romilly 1986, esp. 1–4.

Prodicus, in his work *On the Nature of Man*, names φλέγμα the product of burning and, so to speak, overcooking of humours, after *pephlekthtai* ('to be inflamed'). In so doing, he uses the word in another way, but maintains the thing consistent with others. The innovation of this man regarding names is sufficiently shown by Plato, too. So what is named *phlegma* by everybody, and is white-coloured, that Prodicus names *blenna*, is a cold and wet humour.<sup>51</sup>

τὸ δ' ἐκ συντήξεως ἀπαλῆς σαρκὸς γενέσθαι ποτὲ φλέγμα τῶν ἀτοπωτάτων ἐστί, πλὴν εἴ τις Πρὸδικος ὑπαλλάττων τοῦνομα τὸν πικρόχολον χυμὸν ὀνομάζει φλέγμα διὰ τὸ νομίζειν ἀπὸ τοῦ πεφλέχθαι τὴν προσηγορίαν αὐτῷ γεγονέναι.

That phlegm is ever generated from the liquefaction of tender flesh, however, is most absurd, unless a Prodicus were to change the name of bitter bile and call it 'phlegm' in the belief that it got its name from having been burned (*pephlekthtai*).<sup>52</sup>

According to the Arabic translation of Ḥubayš ibn al-Ḥasan through which it has been preserved, the first book of the treatise *On Medical Names* is very likely to have contained a very similar formulation, in a passage<sup>53</sup> portraying Prodicus as a typical example of people who demand that the explanation of words be taken from the indication (*dalāla*)<sup>54</sup> of the words themselves, in contrast to those who rely on usage:

He [viz. Prodicus] did so [viz. called the gall/bile 'phlegm'] only because the name *phlegma* in Greek, when one looks into its derivation [etymology?] (*iḍā nuẓira fī štiqāqi-hi*), is found derived (*wuġida muštaqqan*) from 'becoming inflamed' and 'burning'.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>51</sup> *Nat. Fac.* 2.9 (2.130 K), ed. G. Helmreich, Leipzig, 1893. It is noticeable that Plato, in his numerous allusions to Prodicus (see previous fn.), never speaks of καινοτομία 'innovation.' However, he attributes to the sophist the recommendation "to learn the correctness of names," περὶ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος μαθεῖν (Plat., *Euthyd.* 277e).

<sup>52</sup> *Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 8.6.47 (5.699 K), ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15]. This passage deals with the way Plato understands "white phlegm," τὸ λευκὸν φλέγμα, in the *Timaeus*.

<sup>53</sup> The two further mentions of Prodicus in the same book only reassert what has already been said in this passage.

<sup>54</sup> The word *dalāla* (from the verb *dalla* 'to indicate, to designate') is regularly used as an equivalent of δῆλωσις or of words kindred to ἐνδεικνύειν/ἐνδείκνυσθαι (esp. ἐνδειξις). On ἐνδειξις of names, see Manetti 2003, 209–210; *infra* § 3.2 and fn. 179–182.

<sup>55</sup> *Med. Nom.*, fol. 98<sup>r</sup> (Arabic text p. 13, l. 28), ed. M. Meyerhof/J. Schacht, Berlin, 1931; transcr. & transl. R. Alessi [see fn. 1]. This is the most striking of three passages of *Medical Names* in which the presence of the word ἐτυμολογία or its derivatives is doubtful, in spite of Meyerhof and Schacht's translation *Etymologie* (p. 26, l. 29–31: "weil sich der Name φλέγμα auf griechisch, wenn man sich seine Etymologie überlegt, als von 'Entzündung' und 'Brennen' abgeleitet ergibt"). Here, as in the two other passages (fol. 91<sup>r</sup>, Arabic text p. 7, l. 3–4, Germ. transl. *Worta-*

As in the case of the Chrysippean etymology of καρδιά, it is noteworthy that Galen does not explicitly call the link between φλέγμα and πεφλέχθαι into question. The “mistake” of Prodicus<sup>56</sup> lies rather in his choice of “innovation regarding names,” ἢ ἐν τοῖς ὀνόμασι καινοτομία, instead of following the common usage like “everybody,” “not only ancient physicians but also the other Greeks.”<sup>57</sup> The idea that, when it comes to language, “customary usage” (συνήθεια) prevails over all other considerations is recurrent in Galen’s writings;<sup>58</sup> for this reason, the word

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*bleitung (Etymologie)* p. 16, l. 41–44; fol. 103<sup>r</sup>, Arabic text p. 17, l. 13–14, Germ. transl. *etymologisch [...] abgeleitet* p. 31, l. 25–28), the Arabic translation shows only terms based on the verb *šaqqā* ‘to divide, to cut, to split’ at the 8th form *ištaqqā min* ‘to derive (a word) from,’ the nomen actionis *ištiqāq* ‘taking a part from, derivation’ and the passive participle *muštaqqun* ‘taken (from), derived,’ both regularly rendering Greek phrases expressing derivation (παράγεσθαι, παρονομάζεσθαι, [παρωνύμως] ὀνομάζεσθαι ἀπό/παρά/ἐκ *uel sim.*) in other Arabic translations of texts still preserved in Greek. On the other hand, in the sole available Arabic translation of a Galenic passage showing ἔτυμολογία, the translator (Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq) renders both ἔτυμολογία and ἀπό [...] γεγονέναι ‘to come from’ by the perfect passive *uštaqqā (min)* ‘is derived (from)’ (τὴν ἔτυμολογίαν ἐποιήσαντο τῆς προσηγορίας ἀπὸ τοῦ [...] γεγονέναι φάσκοντες [*In Hipp. Aph.* 5.5, 17b.788–789 K; see *infra* § 3.1 and fn. 155]: *wa-qad yuqālu inna-hu innamā štuqqā la-hu hādā l-ismu min* “and it is sometimes said of this name that surely, it is derived from” [ed. P. Pormann et al., online, 2017, p. 5, l. 9–10; transcr. & transl. R. Alessi]). Therefore, to the best of our current knowledge, the comparison with possible parallels in Galenic texts appears as another reliable criterion to assess whether ἔτυμολογία or its derivatives lie behind the text of the *Medical Names*. In this respect, the Greek evidence would argue in favour of the presence of a word expressing the idea of ‘derivation’ in the two other passages (fol. 91<sup>r</sup> and 103<sup>r</sup>), but possibly of ‘etymology’ in the first part of the passage mentioning Prodicus (fol. 98<sup>r</sup>), on the basis of the parallel wording of the *Differences of Fevers*, where Prodicus is blamed for “being convinced by the amazing etymology,” πρὸς τῆς θαυμαστῆς ἔτυμολογίας ἀναπειθόμενος, regarding the word φλέγμα (see *supra* and fn. 49). If so, this very sentence of *Medical Names* would show two different Greek words, ‘derivation’ and ‘etymology,’ rendered by terms based on the same Arabic verb, which does not seem *prima facie* to be unlikely. For a full discussion on the subject, see Alessi /Rousseau (forthcoming).

**56** As stated in the following lines of the *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*: καὶ μέντοι κάξ αὐτοῦ τοῦ προσθεῖναι τῷ φλέγματι τὸ τῆς χροᾶς ὄνομα δηλὸς ἐστὶν οὐκ ἐν τῇ προσηγορίᾳ σφαλόμενος, ὥσπερ ὁ Πρόδικος, ἀλλ’ ἐν τῇ γνώσει τῆς φύσεως τοῦ χυμοῦ “And since (Plato) adds to phlegm the name of its color, obviously he was not mistaken in the name, as Prodicus was, but in the knowledge of the nature of the humor” (*Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 8.6.50 [5.700 K], ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15]).

**57** According to the *Anonymus Londinensis*, Philolaus of Croton was of the same opinion as Prodicus: “while most say that phlegm is cold, he lays it down that it is by nature hot, ‘phlegm’ being derived from *phlegein* (‘to burn’)” (18.41–44, transl. W.H.S. Jones, Cambridge, 1947).

**58** See esp. Manetti 2003, 207; 213–215; 2009 *passim*.

καινοτομία is never positively connoted,<sup>59</sup> because it appears as exactly contrary to the observance of συνήθεια, as stressed in the *Differences of Pulses*:<sup>60</sup>

τάχ' οὖν τινι θαυμάζειν ἔπεισι τῆς καινοτομίας τοῦ Μάγνου. τί γὰρ ἔδει μετατιθέναι τὰ ση-  
μαίνόμενα τῶν ὀνομάτων, εἴτε ὀρθῶς εἴτε οὐκ ὀρθῶς οἱ πρόσθεν ἰατροὶ κατεχρήσαντο  
αὐτοῖς;

It will probably come to someone's mind to be amazed at how Magnus innovates. Where was the need to change the meanings of names, whether correctly or incorrectly used by the previous physicians?<sup>61</sup>

καὶ Ζήνων δὲ ὁ Κιτιεὺς ἔτι πρότερον ἐτόλμησε καινοτομεῖν τε καὶ ὑπερβαίνειν τὸ τῶν  
Ἑλλήνων ἔθος ἐν τοῖς ὀνόμασιν.

And Zeno of Citium too, even earlier, boldly undertook to innovate and to overstep the custom of the Greeks regarding names.<sup>62</sup>

In this respect, the specification εἴτε ὀρθῶς εἴτε οὐκ ὀρθῶς οἱ πρόσθεν ἰατροὶ κατεχρήσαντο αὐτοῖς “whether correctly or incorrectly used by the previous physicians”<sup>63</sup> is particularly significant. From Galen's point of view, the reason why Magnus disputes against his predecessors, namely the wish for a “proper use of words,” κυριολογεῖν,<sup>64</sup> cannot be legitimate, because there is no reason at all for

<sup>59</sup> “Innovation” is also mentioned as the activity of the characters Galen castigates, like Magnus (see *infra* and fn. 61), Zeno of Citium (see *infra* and fn. 62), “the accursed sophists” (οἱ μισροὶ σοφισταί: *Cur. Rat. Ven. Sect.* 2 [11.252 K], transl. Brain [see fn. 9]) or “the so-called Methodists,” οἱ καλούμενοι μεθοδικοί (*Simpl. Med. Temp. & Fac.* 5.24 [11.781 K]), while he denies any personal recourse to such a practice (ἔνεκα τοῦ μὴ δόξαι καινοτομεῖν “in order to avoid seeming to innovate:” *Anat. Adm.* 1.5 [2.246 K]; ὅτι μὴ καινοτομοῦμεν ἡμεῖς “the fact that we do not innovate:” *Diff. Puls.* 2.10 [8.625 K]). On the persistence of a broad meaning, ‘innovation, innovate,’ for καινοτομία and καινοτομεῖν, from Classical Greek to the writings of the Church Fathers, see Rousseau 2020.

<sup>60</sup> On this very important treatise concerning Galen's ideas on language, only fully translated twice into Spanish (A. Ruiz Moreno, Buenos Aires, 1948; L.M. Pino Campos, Madrid [CAG 7], 2010), see *infra* § 2.4 and fn. 140.

<sup>61</sup> *Diff. Puls.* 3.1 (8.641 K).

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* (8.642 K).

<sup>63</sup> Despite the presence of the verb καταχρησθαι ‘to use,’ Magnus does not assess how the previous physicians comply with usage: from Magnus' point of view, the “correct use” of a name is the “proper” one (τὸ κυρίως ὀνομάζειν: see *infra* and next fn.).

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* (8.640 K). As noticed by Galen, οἶδεν οὖν σαφῶς ὁ Μάγνος ὅτι μὴ περὶ πράγματος, ἀλλὰ τοῦ κυρίως ὀνομάζειν, ἢ μὴ κυρίως, πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους ἰατροὺς ἀμφισβητεῖ “also Magnus clearly knows that he does not dispute against the other physicians about the matter, but about the

contravening usage. Accordingly, Galen is not concerned about the accuracy of Prodicus’ etymology. He may even have chosen the example of φλέγμα for the very reason that the etymological interpretation of the sophist is obviously right and thereby allows for an a fortiori demonstration.<sup>65</sup> The *Glossary of Hippocratic Terms* ascribed to Galen, if authentic,<sup>66</sup> recalls, indeed, that two meanings were in use in Hippocratic writings:

φλέγμα· οὐ μόνον τὸν χυμὸν τοῦτον τὸν λευκὸν καὶ ψυχρόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν φλόγωσιν δηλοῖ.

*phlegma*: designates not only the white and cold humor, but also the inflammation.<sup>67</sup>

In this case too, Galen does not blame etymology as such, but the use of it in an inappropriate way—namely, at the expense of usage.

## 2 Etymology according to Galen’s lost treatise *On the Correctness of Names* (Περὶ ὀνομάτων ὁρθότητος)

Besides the sparse occurrences of the word *etymology* itself in Galen’s works,<sup>68</sup> further light on his views about the subject is said to be shed by his treatise *On the Correctness of Names*: according to the *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, the demonstration “that etymology is an impostor, often testifying equally for those who speak the reverse of the truth, and not infrequently giving greater support to speakers of falsehoods than of truths,” and that “concerning the word *egō* (‘I’)

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question of proper or improper naming” (*ibid.*). On the primacy of matters (πράγματα) over names (ὀνόματα), see *infra* § 2.1.

<sup>65</sup> The line of argument may be resumed as follows: “no interpretation, even an obviously right one provided by etymology, can outweigh the observance of Greek usage.”

<sup>66</sup> As admitted by the most recent research: see the Introduction of L. Perilli’s edition, translation and commentary, Berlin (CMG V 13, 1), 2017, 131–132.

<sup>67</sup> *Gloss.* φ 16 Perilli (19.151 K). On the use of φλέγμα within the Hippocratic corpus, see J. Jouanna (2009 [1974], 92–96, esp. 93–94, fn. 2), who recalls that the Ancients explained the semantic evolution from ‘inflammation’ to ‘cold humor’ by antiphrasis (κατ’ ἀντίφρασιν: see e.g. Orion of Thebes s.u., col. 159, ed. F.W. Sturz, Leipzig, 1820), and puts forward another explanation (which is however not taken up by recent etymological dictionaries: see fn. 189).

<sup>68</sup> On the four last occurrences, see *infra* § 3.1.

Chrysippus etymologized miserably,”<sup>69</sup> is to be found there; this is the reason why, on three different occasions, Galen refrains from further discussion on the subject in the *Doctrines*:

πάντ' οὖν ὅσα τοιαῦτα τῶν ἐπιχειρημάτων ἐν τοῖς Περὶ ἀποδείξεως ἐδείξαμεν οὐκ οἰκεῖα τῷ ζητουμένῳ πράγματι καὶ διὰ τοῦτο νῦν οὐ χρὴ μῆκύνειν περὶ αὐτῶν, ὥσπερ οὐδ' ἐπὶ τῶν ἐκ τῆς ἐτυμολογίας ὀρρωμένων· εἴρηται γὰρ καὶ περὶ ἐκείνων αὐτάρκως ἐν τοῖς Περὶ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος.

Now all such arguments we have shown in our work *On Demonstration* to be foreign to the subject of the inquiry, and therefore it is not necessary to prolong the present discussion of them; nor (need I discuss further) the arguments derived from etymology, for enough was said about them in the work *On the Correctness of Names*.<sup>70</sup>

Unfortunately, the treatise is lost, and this loss is particularly regrettable given the importance of this text. Indeed, at the very end of his treatise *On the Order of [His] Own Books*, Galen recommends to read *On the Correctness of Names* preferably “first of all,” “before all other treatises,” ἥν δὴ καὶ πρώτην ἀπασῶν ἄμεινον ἀναγιγνώσκειν.<sup>71</sup>

Hence it seems worth performing a thorough analysis of the occurrences of ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης in Galen’s works, beyond the mentions of the title of the lost treatise, in order to get a precise idea of what this phrase exactly refers to. The word ὀρθότης, to be sure, is not only very rare in Galen, but also mostly employed within this phrase: while six of its occurrences have a concrete meaning, expressing the

<sup>69</sup> *Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 2.2.7–8 (5.214 K); see fn. 28–29. A similar observation takes place in the next chapter: “throughout the second book of *On the Correctness of Names* I have shown how absurd (Chrysippus and his school) are in their remarks about the vowel *e*” (*ibid.* 2.3.22 [5.225 K], ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15]).

<sup>70</sup> *Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 2.2.23 (5.218 K), ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15]. At the beginning of this chapter, the mention of the treatise *On the Correctness of Names* (see *supra* and previous fn.) is followed by a rhetorical question: “Why then should I again expound at length the same matters here?” In book 3 (*ibid.* 3.5.25–27 [5.328 K]; see *supra* § 1.1 and fn. 45), when Galen, after mentioning Chrysippus’ “arguments from the movements of the hands” and “those from the word *egō*,” point that he also mentioned in his work *On Etymologies*,” recalls that “[he has] already discussed these things (εἴρηται μοι καὶ περὶ τούτων ἤδη) in the second book of [his present] work and in [his] treatise *On the Correctness of Names*,” the phrase “these things” presumably specifically refers to etymology, as in the next sentence, “[the argument] from the etymology of the word *kardia* (‘heart’),” τὰ κατὰ τὴν ἐτυμολογίαν [...] τοῦ τῆς καρδίας ὀνόματος, is characterized as being “in the same class with such arguments,” ὅμοια [...] τοῖς τοιοῦτοις ἐπιχειρήμασι.

<sup>71</sup> *Ord. Lib. Prop.* 5.6 (19.61 K); see *infra* § 2.3 and fn. 102.



“straight position” of a part of the human body,<sup>72</sup> and one refers to the “exactitude” of Hippocrates’ doctrines,<sup>73</sup> the remaining twelve are associated with ὀνομάτων.

Strikingly, moreover, among the six occurrences of ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης that do not refer to Galen’s treatise,<sup>74</sup> four appear in very similar contexts: having mentioned the existence of a discussion on certain words, Galen declares that he refrains from such a discussion on the ground that he does not consider the “correctness of names.”<sup>75</sup> These statements make it all the more crucial to focus on the two passages in which he acknowledges dealing with the subject.<sup>76</sup>

## 2.1 Why should a physician refrain from discussing the “correctness of names:” ὀνόματα versus πράγματα

In the treatise *On the Preservation of Health*, while discussing “whether work, motion and exercise are the same” (εἴτε ταυτόν ἐστι πόνος τε καὶ κίνησις καὶ γυμνάσιον), Galen claims that, given his research topic, he doesn’t have to discuss the “correctness of names,” but merely needs to define the terms he is using:

ἡ δὲ τοῦ πόνου προσηγορία ταυτόν μοι δοκεῖ σημαίνειν θατέρῳ τῷ ὑπὸ τοῦ γυμνασίου ὀνόματος εἰρημένῳ δηλοῦσθαι τῷ κοινῷ. καὶ γὰρ καὶ οἱ σκάπτοντες καὶ οἱ θερίζοντες καὶ ἱπαζόμενοι πονοῦσί τε καὶ γυμνάζονται κατὰ τὸ κοινὸν τοῦ γυμνασίου σημαίνονμενον. ἐμοὶ μὲν οὖν οὕτω διηρήσθω περὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων, καὶ κατὰ ταῦτα τὰ σημαίνονμενα πᾶς ὁ ἐφεξῆς λόγος ἀκουέσθω. εἰ δέ τις ἐτέρως βούλεται χρῆσθαι, συγχωρῶ· οὐδὲ γὰρ ὑπὲρ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος ἤκω σκεψόμενος, ἀλλ’ ὥς ἂν τις ὑγιαίνει μάλιστ’· καὶ πρὸς τοῦτ’ αὐτὸ χρησίμον ὑπάρχον μοι περὶ τε τῶν γυμνασίων καὶ πόνων καὶ ξυλλήβδην εἰπεῖν ἀπάσης κινήσεως διελέσθαι, τὰ σημαίνονμενα τῶν ὀνομάτων ἡναγκάσθην ἀφορίσασθαι.

72 About the human upright position: *Anat. Adm.* 1.2 (2.222–223 K); position of the head: *Anat. Adm.* 4.6 (2.453 K); position of the muscles governing the movements of legs: *Usu Part.* 3.16 (3.260 K), ed. G. Helmreich, Leipzig, 1907; position of the eyelashes: *Usu Part.* 10.7 (3.793 K), ed. G. Helmreich, Leipzig, 1909.

73 Εἰς ὅσον ὀρθότητός τε καὶ ἀληθείας ἦκει τὰ Ἱπποκράτους δόγματα “the extent of exactitude and truth in the doctrines of Hippocrates” (*Nat. Fac.* 1.13 [2.30 K], ed. G. Helmreich [see fn. 51]; transl. A.J. Brock, Cambridge Mass./London [LCL 71], 1916).

74 This latter is mentioned four times in the *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* (see *supra* and fn. 69–70), once in the treatise *On the Order of My Own Books* (see *infra* § 2.3 and fn. 102), and once in the treatise *On My Own Books* (see *infra* § 2.3 and fn. 99).

75 One in the *Preservation of Health* (see *infra* § 2.1 and fn. 78), two in the *Differences of Pulses* (see *infra* § 2.1 and fn. 81 and 83), and one in *Critical Days* (see *infra* § 2.2 and fn. 97).

76 Resp. in the *Function of the Parts of the Body* and in the *Differences of Pulses* (see *infra* § 2.4 and fn. 116 and 139).

The term *work* (*ponos*) seems to me to have the same significance as that designed by the name *exercise* (*gymnasion*), broadly understood;<sup>77</sup> for those who dig, and those who reap, and those who ride, are both toiling (*ponousi*) and exercising (*gymnazontai*), according the broad sense of *gymnasion*. Thereby I shall make this distinction regarding names, and the following discourse in its entirety should be understood according to these meanings. But if anyone wishes to use them otherwise, I acquiesce. For I have not come to discuss the correctness of names, but how one may be most healthy. And the sole consideration of usefulness regarding the distinction between exercise, work, and, to put it briefly, every kind of motion led me to define the meanings of names.<sup>78</sup>

At the beginning of the treatise *On the Differences of Pulses*, Galen even argues for arbitrary names through the example of the highly disputed epithet σφοδρός ‘strong’ applied to σφυγμός ‘pulse,’ leaving the question of the correctness of names to the sophists:<sup>79</sup>

ἐμοὶ μὲν οὖν οὐδ’ εἰ Δίωνα, ἢ Θέωνά τις καλεῖν σφοδρὸν σφυγμὸν ἐθέλοι, μὴ σφάλλοιτο δ’ ἐν τῷ διδάσκειν τίνες αἰτίαι γεννῶσιν αὐτόν, καὶ τίνος διαθέσεώς ἐστι γνῶρισμα, καὶ ἐς ὃ τι τελευτήσῃ, οὐδὲν οὐδὲ οὕτως δοκεῖ σφαλῆσθαι. τῷ μὲν δὴ οὕτω μέλλοντι διδάσκειν ὅτιοῦν ἀρκεῖ νομοθετεῖν ὀνόματα, τῷ δ’ ἐπὶ τοὺς παλαιοὺς ἀναπέμποντι τὸ ἐκείνων ἔθος διδασκτέον, οὐδὲν πάλιν οὐδ’ ἐνταῦθα πολυπραγμονοῦντα πότερον κυρίως, ἢ ἀκύρως

<sup>77</sup> Galen refers to the distinction laid out in the immediately preceding lines between the “common” meaning of γυμνάσιον ‘exercise’ (τοῦτο μὲν δὴ κοινῇ γυμνάσιον ὀνομάζεται) and the “specific” one (ἰδίᾳ δέ), ‘gymnasium, place to which people come to exercise’ (*San. Tu.* 2.2.9–10 [6.85–86 K], ed. K. Koch, Leipzig/Berlin [CMG V 4, 2], 1923).

<sup>78</sup> *San. Tu.* 2.2.10–12 (6.86 K), ed. K. Koch [see previous fn.]; transl. R.P.H. Green, Springfield Ill., 1951, substantially modified (in particular for the translation of κοινός, which in this context refers to the “common” meaning of γυμνάσιον [see previous note], and of ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης).

<sup>79</sup> For a general overview of what Galen means by “sophist,” “a collective label of polemical convenience for quite diverse opponents,” who “transgress” “experience and reason,” “despise the truth,” “give heed only to the reputation (*doxa*) which they hope to gain from their words (*logos*),” “pay no attention to the tasks of the medical art (*ta erga auta tēs technēs*) or to the facts themselves (*auta ta pragmata*),” “lie knowingly,” “deceive the less experienced and engage in unscrupulous knavery (*panourgia*), wasting (*analiskousi, katatribousi*) the time of their pupils and of the young in general with endless quibbling about words (*onomata*) and their meanings (*sēmainomena*),” see von Staden 1997, 34–36, with numerous references. In this regard, it can be stressed that the treatise *On the Differences of Pulses* [see *infra* § 2.4 and fn. 140] is of particular interest, as in the beginning of book 2 (chapters 2 and 3: 8.567–571 K), Galen gives a sustained account of his five grounds of complaint against what he calls ‘sophists:’ they violate Greek usage, they give wrong definitions, they criticize dialectics when a dialectician gets around to demonstrating that their definitions are found wanting, they conversely demand to define everything without admitting that some things may have no definition, and lastly and most seriously they don’t take homonymy into account, so that they don’t give definitions of things, but of words (on the opposition between πράγματα and ὀνόματα, see *infra*).

ώνόμασαν, ἢ ὑπαλλάττειν τολμώντα, ἢ καταμεμóμενον, οἷα δὴ δρῶσιν οἱ σοφισταί. πε-  
ριττὰ γὰρ ταῦτα ἅπαντα καὶ ἔξω τῆς ἡμετέρας τέχνης. οὐ γὰρ ὀνομάτων αὕτη γε ὀρθότητος  
ἐπιστήμη ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ πραγμάτων, οὐδὲ τοὺς μὴ καλῶς ὀνομάζοντας εἰς ἰατροὺς πέμπουσιν  
οἱ ἄνθρωποι, ἀλλὰ τοὺς ὑγείας δεομένους. οὐκοῦν οὐδὲ ὁ λόγος ὅδε πλέον τῶν εἰθισμένων  
ἡμῖν τε καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἰατροῖς ὀνομάτων ἐπαγγέλλεται διδάξειν, ἀλλ’ ἀγαπῇ ἄν, εἰ τούτου  
μετρίως τυγχάνοι.

Even if someone wants to call a strong pulse ‘Dion’ or ‘Theon,’ and makes no mistakes in teaching what causes give rise to it, and of what condition it is indicative, and to what it will lead<sup>80</sup>—not even this person seems to me in any way to go amiss. It is sufficient for someone who intends to teach any subject you like to legislate concerning words, but someone who refers back to earlier people must teach their usage, neither then nor now harping on as to whether they named something properly or improperly, or daring to correct them, or blaming them—which are things the sophists do. For these things are all superfluous and outside the scope of our art, because this branch of knowledge does not concern the correctness of names, but of things; that is, men do not send those who do not name things well to the doctor, but rather those who need health care. So this very discourse does not profess to teach more than the names to which we and other doctors are accustomed, but would be well content if it achieves this in due measure.<sup>81</sup>

A little further on, in the second chapter, he blames those who quibble about the name *διαφοραί*, instead of abiding, as he does, by common usage:

ᾧστε καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐπόμενοι τῇ κρατούσῃ συνηθείᾳ<sup>82</sup> σκοπῶμεν ἤδη, πόσαι μὲν αἱ πᾶσαι τῶν σφυγμῶν διαφοραί, τί δ’ ἐκάστης αὐτῶν τοῦνομα. καίτοι καὶ κατ’ αὐτὴν τὴν εἰρημένην ῥῆσιν φιλονεικοῦσιν, οἱ μὲν ᾧδὲ πως ἀξιοῦντες προβάλλειν, πόσα γένη τῶν σφυγμῶν, οἱ δὲ οὐ γένη φασὶ χρῆναι καλεῖν, ἀλλ’ εἶδη, ποιότητος δ’ ἄλλοι, καὶ διαφορὰς ἄλλοι. καὶ ὅ τι ἂν ἐκάστῳ δόξη, τοῦτ’ ὄνομα θέμενος, ἐρίζει μακρὰ καὶ ἀπέραντα περὶ τῆς ὀρθότητος αὐτοῦ. καὶ ὡς περὶ γενῶν, οὕτω καὶ εἰδῶν καὶ διαφορῶν καὶ ποιοτήτων οὐκ ἀναγκαίαν ἐπεισάγουσι ζήτησιν, ἐπιλαθόμενοι τῆς χρείας τοῦ τοιούτου προβλήματος.

Therefore, sticking to prevailing usage too, we should now consider how many differences of pulses there are, and what is the name of each. However, this very word, too, is a matter

**80** Galen respectively alludes to causes, diagnosis and prognosis, which are the subject matters of the three treatises related to *Differences of Pulses*; see *infra* § 2.4 and fn. 138.

**81** *Diff. Puls.* 1.1 (8.497 K), transl. B. Morison (2008, 142 and 143), slightly modified (esp. for κυρίως ἢ ἀκύρως “properly or improperly”).

**82** This assertion follows a survey of the various words used to designate ‘pulses’ in previous times, concluding with a depiction of the predominant use: ἡ δὲ Πραξαγόρου τε καὶ Ἡροφίλου χρήσις ἔτι καὶ εἰς τὰδε κρατεῖ. σφυγμὸν γὰρ οὕτοι πᾶσαν ἀρτηριῶν κίνησιν τὴν αἰσθητὴν καλοῦσιν. οὕτως δὲ καὶ οἱ μετ’ αὐτοὺς ἅπαντες, εἰ καὶ τοῖς ὀρισμοῖς διαφέρονται “The usage of Praxagoras and Herophilus still prevails up to now: they call *sphugmos* every perceptible movement of arteries. And so do all their successors, even if they diverge on definitions” (*Diff. Puls.* 1.2 [8.498 K]).

of dispute: some more or less claim to disclose the number of genera, others say that one should not call them ‘genera,’ but ‘species,’ others say ‘qualities,’ and others ‘differences.’ And everyone, having established a name as they please, struggles at length and endlessly for its correctness. And just like regarding genera, they introduce unnecessary research regarding species, qualities and differences, being oblivious of the usefulness of such a question.<sup>83</sup>

These texts give many interesting insights on important features of Galen’s views about language, whose detailed analysis would lead this paper too far afield.<sup>84</sup> As regards the ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης, the considered texts claim that the correctness of names goes beyond the scope of medicine: “For these things are all superfluous and outside the scope of our art” (περιττὰ γὰρ ταῦτα ἅπαντα καὶ ἔξω τῆς ἡμετέρας τέχνης); Galen recalls that he has “not come to discuss the correctness of names, but how one may be most healthy” (οὐδὲ γὰρ ὑπὲρ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος ἤκω σκεψόμενος, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἂν τις ὑγιαίνει μάλιστα). In the beginning of the *Differences of Pulses*, the activity of “harping on as to whether they named something properly or improperly, or daring to correct them, or blaming them” (πολυπραγμονοῦντα πότερον κυρίως, ἢ ἀκύρως ὠνόμασαν, ἢ ὑπαλλάττειν τολμῶντα, ἢ καταμεμφόμενον) is even assigned to the “sophists” (οἷα δὲ δρῶσιν οἱ σοφισταί), which may sound quite unflattering.<sup>85</sup>

In this respect, the opposition between “things, matters” (πράγματα) and “names, words” (ὀνόματα) pervading these texts is of particular significance. Indeed, a phrase like “this branch of knowledge does not concern the correctness of names, but of things” (οὐ γὰρ ὀνομάτων αὕτη γε ὀρθότητος ἐπιστήμη ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ πραγμάτων)<sup>86</sup> clearly has a Platonic flavour. Actually, Galen more than once expressly mentions Plato’s name in relation with the idea that science has to do with things, not with words, as for example in a striking formula of the *Therapeutic Method*:

<sup>83</sup> *Diff. Puls.* 1.2 (8.498–499 K).

<sup>84</sup> *Inter alia*, the arbitrariness of names, which leads to the possibility of calling anything by any name (see fn. 94); the link between linguistic and pedagogical issues (see *infra* and fn. 94); the condemnation of eristic (τὸ ἐπίζειν: see also *infra* § 2.2 and fn. 97); the reflection on the ‘institution’ (νομοθεσία) of words or of word meanings (see also *infra* § 2.3 and fn. 102); the primacy of usage (see in particular *supra* § 1.2 and fn. 57–62).

<sup>85</sup> See fn. 79.

<sup>86</sup> Explicitly linking medicine with πράγματα: see also *Di. Dec.* 1.4 (9.789 K), quoted *infra* § 2.2 and fn. 97 (ἀποχωρήσαντες τῶν ἱατρικῶν πραγμάτων “they have strayed away from medical matters”), or *San. Tu.* 2.2.10–12 (6.86 K), quoted *supra* and fn. 78 (“I have not come to discuss the correctness of names, but how one may be most healthy”).

ἀλλ’ ὅπερ αἰεὶ λέγομεν ἐπόμενοι τῷ θείῳ Πλάτῳ, καταφρονεῖν μὲν χρὴ τῶν ὀνομάτων, μὴ καταφρονεῖν δὲ τῆς τῶν πραγμάτων ἐπιστήμης.

But what I always say, following the divine Plato, is that we should think little of names but not think little of knowledge of the matters.<sup>87</sup>

The phrase ὀνομάτων καταφρονεῖν, not infrequent in Galen,<sup>88</sup> is not found as such in Plato. However, Galen elsewhere happens to quote the philosopher almost *verbatim*:

ἀλλὰ τοῦτο μὲν ἐν ὅλῳ χρὴ φυλάττειν τῷ λόγῳ τῆς Πλατωνικῆς παραινέσεως αἰεὶ μεμνημένους, ὡς ἐὰν παραμελῶμεν ὀνομάτων, πλουσιώτεροι φρονήσεως εἰς τὸ γῆρας ἀφιξόμεθα.

Let us observe and always remember in the whole discourse Plato’s precept, that if we disregard words, we will come to old age richer in wisdom.<sup>89</sup>

The text given by the treatise *On the Function of the Parts of the Body* is indeed almost identical to the Stranger’s words in the *Statesman*:

καλῶς γε, ὦ Σώκρατες· κἂν διαφυλάξης τὸ μὴ σπουδάζειν ἐπὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασι, πλουσιώτερος εἰς τὸ γῆρας ἀναφανήσει φρονήσεως.

Good, Socrates! If you preserve this attitude of indifference to mere names, you will turn out richer in wisdom when you are old.<sup>90</sup>

**87** *Meth. Med.* 11.12 (10.772 K), transl. I. Johnston & G.H.R. Horsley [see fn. 10]. Likewise *Anat. Adm.* 6.13 (2.581 K): ἀλλὰ σύ γε πειθόμενος ἐμοὶ καὶ Πλάτῳ τῶν μὲν ὀνομάτων καταφρονήσεις αἰεὶ, σπουδάσεις δὲ πρῶτον μὲν καὶ μάλιστα τὴν ἐπιστήμην τῶν πραγμάτων, εἴθ’ ἐξῆς, ὅταν ἕτερόν τινα διδάσκῃς, τὴν σαφήνειαν, ἣς καὶ τὸν Πλάτωνα καὶ ἡμᾶς, ὅση δύναμις ἡμῖν ἐστὶ, φροντίζοντας ὁρᾷς “You, however, relying on Plato and me, will always think little of names, and will zealously seek in the first place and above all the science of the matters, and in the second place, when teaching someone else, the clarity, about which you see that Plato and we are concerned as far as possible.” See also, in a very similar wording, *Diff. Feb.* 2.7 (7.354–355 K). On Galen’s claim for clarity, see e.g. Manetti (2003, 173–174) and van den Berg (2008, 57), who points out that “this insistence on clarity as the virtue of language is Aristotelian, rather than Platonic.” On the necessity of using names for teaching purposes, and on the link between clarity and teaching, see *infra* and fn. 94.

**88** See e.g. *Caus. Symp.* 3.7.4 (7.247 K); *In Hipp. Epid. I*, 3.5 Wenkebach (17a.233 K).

**89** *Usu Part.* 4.13 (3.309 K), ed. G. Helmreich [see fn. 72].

**90** Plat., *Pol.* 261e, ed. & transl. H.N. Fowler & W.R.M. Lamb, Cambridge Mass./London (LCL 164), 1925.

Therefore, one can assume that when Galen sets “things” against “names,” a Platonic background may in any case be involved, even if the philosopher is not expressly mentioned. Accordingly, the title *ὀνομάτων ὁρθότης*, clearly linked by Galen with this opposition, is most obviously to be understood as an explicit reference to the subtitle of Plato’s *Cratylus*.<sup>91</sup> Hence the “correctness of names” has precisely to do with etymology, insofar as this phrase expresses Cratylus’ theory of a natural link between names and things, necessarily leading to research on “primary names,” *πρῶτα ὀνόματα*, as opposed to Hermogenes’ claim of the conventional origin of language, based on “pact and agreement,” *συνθήκη καὶ ὁμολογία*; and Galen’s prejudice against names meets Socrates’ conclusion, at the end of the *Cratylus*:

ἀγαπητὸν δὲ καὶ τοῦτο ὁμολογήσασθαι, ὅτι οὐκ ἐξ ὀνομάτων, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μᾶλλον αὐτὰ ἐξ αὐτῶν καὶ μαθητέον καὶ ζητητέον ἢ ἐκ τῶν ὀνομάτων.

But it is worth while to have reached even this conclusion, that [realities] are to be learned and sought for, not from names but much better through themselves than through names.<sup>92</sup>

This very conclusion seems, indeed, to be that to which Galen alludes indirectly in his treatise *On Medical Names* (*Περὶ τῶν ἱατρικῶν ὀνομάτων*), which refers to Plato by name:

Nobody should blame the one who introduces well-defined names and designations after extracting the science <by relying> on well-defined facts in an attempt to shorten and approach the source of science, since we, as human beings, only benefit from names and designations inasmuch some of us inform the others through the language about the things and meanings they want to communicate; if we did not have this, we would be no better than the deaf and the dumb, while making the things themselves apparent, as Plato also

<sup>91</sup> As emphasized by van den Berg (2008, 42–43 and fn. 40–42), in the Imperial period, this subtitle, “whether or not [it] actually goes back on Plato” (as “it fits the content of the dialogue very well,” and takes up the very wording of the text, in 383a–384a), was already “perceived of as a part of the text under discussion,” specifying “the issue under discussion.” The identity of the title of Galen’s treatise with the subtitle of the *Cratylus* is noticed, e.g., by van den Berg 2008, 57; Morison 2008, 120–123; see also Tieleman 1996, 208, fn. 47, with relevant bibliography “on the correctness of names as a stock topic of sophistic theorizing on language.”

<sup>92</sup> Plat., *Crat.* 439b, ed. & transl. H.N. Fowler, Cambridge Mass./London (LCL 167), 1939. According to van den Berg (2008, 56–57), who charts the reception of Plato’s *Cratylus*, Galen is a “dissident voice” among “Middle Platonists:” whereas “in the Imperial period it was generally assumed that Plato in the *Cratylus* had practiced Stoic etymology,” so that “the real message of the *Cratylus*, that we should study the things themselves instead of their names, was evidently lost on most of Plato’s readers,” Galen, “a great, if not uncritical, admirer of Plato, provides an exception to that rule,” in appearing “extremely critical of Stoic etymology.”

said, can sometimes happen free of names and designations when we look into their nature, and nothing further, with a steady eye. The proof of this is that the experts, who attribute names and designations to the things they acquire knowledge of, necessarily arrive at the naming and designation of the things only after they have previously found these things and become aware of them.<sup>93</sup>

Likewise, the reason given to explain the resulting consequence, namely the narrowing of the utility of words down to teaching purposes,<sup>94</sup> echoes the one expressed in the *Cratylus* not long before Socrates’ conclusion: “he who in his inquiry after things follows names and examines into the meaning of each one runs great risks of being deceived (ἐξαπατηθῆναι),” for “he who first gave names, gave such names as agreed with his conception of the nature of things;” if the name-giver’s conception was incorrect, those who follow him will be deceived.<sup>95</sup> In Galen’s words,

**93** *Med. Nom.*, fol. 84<sup>v</sup> (Arabic text p. 1, l. 13–19), ed. J. Meyerhof /M. Schacht (Germ. transl. p. 8, l. 23–31) [see fn. 55], transl. R. Alessi [see fn. 1].

**94** Also formulated, in particular, in the key passage of the *Therapeutic Method* immediately preceding the analysis of disease names (see Introduction and fn. 13): “Indeed, even if someone were to call (this condition) ‘Theon’ or ‘Dion,’ as long as he treats it correctly he would do no harm to the diseased person. And if someone leaves it completely nameless (ἀνώνυμος), but applies the remedies that are necessary to the patient, in addition to doing no harm, he will still be treating it in the best possible way. But surely, if someone wishes to teach (διδάσκειν) another the things he knows, he will require names for the matters, and will have clarity (σαφήνεια) as his criterion in the use of these (ὅρος [...] τῆς χρήσεως αὐτῶν). The best teacher (ἄριστος διδάσκαλος) is the man who zealously pursues this issue of nomenclature so that the student may learn with the utmost clarity (σαφέστατα). Accordingly, since I, too, am now engaged in this [teaching], it is presumably necessary to apply names to the matters (ἀνάγκη μὲν που θέσθαι τοῖς πράγμασιν ὀνόματα). To do this clearly (σαφῶς) is my present objective” (*Meth. Med.* 2.1 [10.81 K], transl. I. Johnston & G.H.R. Horsley [see fn. 10]. See also, *inter alia*, the lines preceding the passage of the *Differences of Pulses* quoted *supra*, also characterized by recourse to the example of the arbitrary names Theon and Dion (see *supra* and fn. 81): ταῦτα δὲ ἐκ τῶν πραγμάτων, οὐκ ἐκ τῶν ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς ὀνομάτων εὕρεσται. καθόλου γὰρ πρὸς μὲν τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων ἐπιστήμην οὐδὲν ἡμᾶς ὠφελεῖ τὰ ὀνόματα, πρὸς δὲ τὴν διδασκαλίαν μόνον, ἣν καὶ κατὰ τὴν συνθήκην περαινέσθαι δυνατόν “This is discovered on the basis of things, and not on the basis of the words assigned to them. Words are of no help at all to us in gaining knowledge of things, but only in teaching, which can even be achieved by coming to agreements” (*Diff. Puls.* 1.1 [8.496 K]), partial transl. B. Morison 2008, 139 [from καθόλου το δυνατόν]).

**95** Plat., *Crat.* 436a-c, ed. & transl. H.N. Fowler [see fn. 92]. See Morison (2008, 132–134), who stresses the Platonic origin of this idea in several passages where Galen is taking over the verb ἐξαπατᾶσθαι ‘to be deceived.’

Anyone who yearns for the truth (ὁ τῆς ἀληθείας αὐτῆς ὁρεγόμενος) should attempt to rid himself in every way of what is believed in regard to names (ἀποχωρεῖν μὲν τοῦ προσδοξαζομένου τοῖς ὀνόμασιν), go to the very substance of the matters (ἐπὶ δὲ τὴν οὐσίαν τῶν πραγμάτων αὐτὴν ἰέναι), reflect on this, and seek out how many diseases and symptoms there are in all and, over and above this, their *proegoumenic* causes.<sup>96</sup>

Yet the uselessness, for a physician, of an enquiry on the correctness of names does not necessarily imply that such an enquiry should be entirely ruled out.

## 2.2 Who should discuss the “correctness of names”

Indeed, a precise distribution of roles is provided by the treatise *On Critical Days*, blaming “most physicians” (οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν ἰατρῶν) who “compete concerning the word” (περὶ ὀνόματος ἀμιλλώμενοι) κρίσις and set forth various definitions, being unaware (λελήθασιν) of the complexity of the matters (ὑπὲρ πρᾶγμα οὐχ ἀπλόν)—i.e., being unaware that the question whether the sixth day should be said “critical” (κρίσιμος) cannot be answered with a mere yes or no answer:

εἴτ' ἐρίζουσι περὶ τοῦ σημαινομένου μακρά, μὴδ' αὐτὸ τοῦτο γινώσκοντες, ὡς ἀποχωρήσαντες τῶν ἱατρικῶν πραγμάτων ἢ διαλεκτικοῖς, ἢ γραμματικοῖς, ἢ ῥήτορι πρέπουσαν ἐπαναιροῦνται σκέψιν. διαλεκτικοῦ μὲν γὰρ ὑπὲρ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος σκοπεῖσθαι, ῥητόρων δὲ καὶ γραμματικῶν, εἰ σύνηθες τοῖς Ἑλλήσι τοῦνομα. καὶ ταῦτα ποιοῦσιν ἔνιοι τῶν ἰατρῶν εἰς τοσοῦτον ἢ διαλεκτικῆς, ἢ γραμματικῆς, ἢ ῥητορικῆς ἐπαίοντες εἰς ὅσον ὄνοι λύρας. οὗτοι μὲν οὖν καὶ τὰ τῶν ἰατρῶν ἀφέντες καὶ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων κακῶς μεταχειρισάμενοι καθ' ἑκάτερα πλημμελοῦσιν. ἡμεῖς δὲ ὅπως μὲν ἂν τις ἄριστα χρῶτο τοῖς ἱατρικοῖς ὀνόμασιν, ἐτέρωθι δεδηλώκαμεν· ἐν δὲ τῷ παρόντι λόγῳ τῶν ἡμερῶν τὴν φύσιν ἐξηγήσασθαι προὔθεμεθα, τοὺς σοφιστικοὺς λήρους ἐτέροις παρέντες, οἷς οὐ τῶν ἔργων τῆς τέχνης φροντίς, ἀλλὰ τοῦ φλυαρεῖν, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ μεираκίων διατριβαῖς.

Then they are involved in long disputes about meaning, without being aware of this: that they have strayed from medical matters and are embarking on an enquiry suitable for dialecticians, grammarians, or rhetoricians. For it is the dialectician's task to investigate about the correctness of names, and the task of grammarians and rhetoricians to investigate whether the name is the customary one for the Greeks. And some doctors do this even though they

<sup>96</sup> *Meth. Med.* 2.2 (10.84–85 K), transl. I. Johnston & G.H.R. Horsley [see fn. 10]. This statement functions as an explanation of Galen's reluctance to develop further his analysis of disease names (quoted *supra*: see Introduction and fn. 13), abruptly halted in the following terms: “But if I were to go over them all, perhaps I would be in danger of seeming to be serious (σπουδάζειν) about something of secondary importance (τὸ πάρεργον)—something I gave instructions to avoid” (*ibid.* 10.84 K). On the possible Epicurean connotations attached to the substantive participle τὸ προσδοξαζόμενον ‘additional belief,’ see Hankinson 1994, 174; Manetti 2003, 208 and fn. 97. For examples of additional beliefs conveyed by certain words, see § 2.4.



have as much knowledge or dialectic, grammar, or rhetoric, as donkeys do of the lyre. In doing so, they both dismiss medical matters and badly engage in tasks of other people, thus making a twofold mistake. But we have shown elsewhere how one should use medical terms in the best way. In the present discourse, we have intended to explain the inherent nature of each day, leaving these sophistical trifles to others, who don’t care for the facts of the art, but rather for talking nonsense, as they do in discussions of striplings.<sup>97</sup>

Despite the polemical tone of some phrases like “these sophistical trifles” (τούς σοφιστικούς λήρους) and “talking nonsense, as they do in discussions of striplings” (τοῦ φλυαρεῖν, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ μειρακίων διατριβαῖς), Galen does not, in fact, condemn investigations into the correctness of names *per se*. Rather, his target is precisely the physicians’ concern about a subject that is outside their area of expertise, in addition to being useless for the field of medicine.<sup>98</sup>

## 2.3 Scope of a discussion on the “correctness of names”

The other essential issue pointed out by the very interesting text *On Critical Days* is the sharp distinction between the question of the correctness of names, assigned to the dialectician (διαλεκτικοῦ μὲν γὰρ ὑπὲρ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος σκοπεῖσθαι), and the question of usage, assigned to rhetoricians and grammarians (ῥητόρων δὲ καὶ γραμματικῶν, εἰ σύνηθες τοῖς Ἑλλήσι τοῦνομα). This echoes the placement, in Galen’s bio-bibliographic treatise *On [His] Own Books*, of the “three books on the *Correctness of Names*” (περὶ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος τρία) within the “Works useful for demonstrations,” *Περὶ τῶν εἰς τὰς ἀποδείξεις χρησίμων βιβλίων* (chapter 14),<sup>99</sup> rather than within his “Works common to grammarians and

<sup>97</sup> *Di. Dec.* 1.4 (9.788–789 K), partial transl. B. Morison 2008, 130 (from ἐρίζουσι to λύρας), slightly modified (“orators/oratory” being replaced by “rhetoricians/rhetoric”). On the allusion to the treatise *On Medical Names*, see *infra* § 2.3 and fn. 108.

<sup>98</sup> As stressed by B. Morison (2008, 130–131), who concludes: “his complaint about investigations into etymology and previous usage is that they are conducted *at the expense* of medicine and philosophy, not that they are conducted *to court*.” However, the passage of the treatise *On Examining the Best Physicians*, only preserved in an Arabic translation, quoted by B. Morison according to the English translation of its editor, “(some wealthy people) investigate the etymology of words, and how these were used in the past. They neglect the most useful, the best and greatest of all sciences, medicine and philosophy” (*Opt. Med. Cogn.*, ed. & transl. A.Z. Iskandar, Berlin [CMG Suppl. Or. IV], 1988, p. 129–131), should not be counted as indisputable evidence, as the Arabic *wa-man ta’arrafa l-alfāza kayfa kānat tusta’malu qadīman*, translated “they investigate the etymology of words, and how these were used in the past” merely signifies “[they] seek how the words were used in the past:” see Alessi/Rousseau (forthcoming).

<sup>99</sup> *Lib. Prop.* 14.21 (19.44 K), ed. V. Boudon-Millot [see fn. 4].

rheticians,” τὰ τοῖς γραμματικοῖς καὶ ῥήτορσι κοινά (chapter 20).<sup>100</sup> Within this framework, ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης cannot refer to “usage,” χρήσις, despite the fact that Galen explains, at the end of his treatise *On the Order of [His] Own Books*, that the treatise *On the Correctness of Names*, which he recommends to read “before all others,”<sup>101</sup> has been written “because of those who use words badly,” διὰ τοὺς κακῶς χρωμένους τοῖς ὀνόμασιν. The broader context in which this utterance is made corroborates this analysis, since Galen has just explained that he does not consider the requirements of Atticism as important and that one should not “blame those who commit solecisms,” μέμφεσθαι τῶν σολοικιζόντων τῇ φωνῇ:

Now, you have also heard from me about my large dictionary, which lists in alphabetical order those words used by the Attic prose-writers (περὶ τῆς πραγματείας, ἐν ᾗ τὰ παρὰ τοῖς Ἀττικοῖς συγγραφεύσιν ὀνόματα κατὰ τὴν τῶν πρώτων ἐν αὐτοῖς γραμμάτων ἡθροιστὶ τάξις). [...] I do not share the opinion of some of our contemporaries, who demand universal Atticism in language (ὅπερ ἔνιοι τῶν νῦν κελεύουσιν, ἅπαντας ἀττικίζειν τῇ φωνῇ), irrespective of whether a person is a doctor, a philosopher, a geometer, a musician, a lawyer, or indeed none of the above, but merely a gentleman of means, or for that matter just reasonably well provided. On the contrary, I consider unworthy to blame and censure those who commit solecisms (τοῦναντίον γὰρ ἀπαξιώ μηδενὶ μέμφεσθαι τῶν σολοικιζόντων τῇ φωνῇ μηδ’ ἐπιτιμᾶν). For it is much better to commit solecism and barbarism in words than to do so in deeds (ἄμεινον γάρ ἐστι τῇ φωνῇ μᾶλλον ἢ τῷ βίῳ σολοικίζειν τε καὶ βαρβαρίζειν). And I once wrote a treatise against those who censure the perpetrators of linguistic solecisms—so far am I from considering Atticism a part of correct education. Yet many doctors and philosophers, in the same writings, lay down new meanings for Greek words and blame others for doing so (ἐν οἷς αὐτοὶ νομοθετοῦσι καινὰ σημαινόμενα τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν ὀνομάτων, ἐν τούτοις ἑτέροις μέμφεσθαι): for this reason I made this commentary on the words which I collected in forty-eight books from the Attic prose-writers (and some others from the comic poets). The work is, as I have said, written for the sake of meanings (γέγραπται μὲν οὖν, ὡς ἔφην, ἡ πραγματεία διὰ τὰ σημαινόμενα); at the same time, the reader automatically gains a knowledge of Attic vocabulary, though this is of no great value in itself. Because of those

**100** Translated “Works of both linguistic and rhetorical interest” by P.N. Singer: see *supra*, Introduction and fn. 4. In this regard, von Staden’s (1995, 499, fn. 1) inclusion of the *Correctness of Words* within a list of “works on language” that otherwise contains only treatises mentioned in chapter 20 may be misleading. On the probable authenticity of the headings describing the content of each section of the treatise, see the fn. *ad Lib. Prop.* 1.1 (19.11 K) in V. Boudon-Millot’s edition [see fn. 4].

**101** See *supra* § 2 (Introduction) and fn. 71.

who use words badly (διὰ τοὺς κακῶς χρωμένους τοῖς ὀνόμασιν), however, I composed another work, on their correctness—a work, in fact, which would be best read first of all.<sup>102</sup>

As Galen clearly points out, his research concerning Attic words does not aim at censuring solecisms and teaching correct usage, and the “knowledge of Attic vocabulary” “is of no great value in itself.” This research was prompted, Galen insistently recalls, by the “new meanings” (καινὰ σημαίνόμενα) given to Greek words by “many doctors and philosophers” (πολλοὺς ἰατροὺς καὶ φιλοσόφους), and hence written “for the sake of meanings,” διὰ τὰ σημαίνόμενα.<sup>103</sup>

Hence a conclusion advising the reader to consult a book on “correct usage”<sup>104</sup> would be inconsistent: it seems preferable to keep for περὶ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος the meaning corresponding to the tradition as well as to all other Galenic occurrences, and to understand “those who use words badly,” οἱ κακῶς χρώμενοι τοῖς ὀνόμασιν, as broadly referring to those who misemphasize the words, taking them into consideration for their demonstrations instead of looking at the things themselves.<sup>105</sup> Thereupon the advice, in the conclusion of the treatise *On the Order of My Own Books*, to read the *Correctness of Names*, which discusses Chrysippus’ “arguments derived from etymology,” τῶν ἐκ τῆς ἐτυμολογίας ὀρμωμένων,<sup>106</sup> “first of all,” functions as a warning for the reader of Galen’s books on language, and especially of the *Words in Attic prose-writers*: such a reader should keep in mind that names do not necessarily reflect the nature of things.<sup>107</sup>

**102** *Ord. Lib. Prop.* 5.6 (19.61 K), ed. V. Boudon-Millot [see fn. 4]; transl. (modified) P.N. Singer, Oxford/New York, 1997. The sentence ἐν οἷς αὐτοὶ νομοθετοῦσι... μέμφεσθαι was incomplete until V. Boudon-Millot’s edition (instead of μέμφεσθαι, given by the *Vlatadon* 14 manuscript, there is a lacuna in the *Ambrosianus* gr. 659).

**103** That is, to prevent misunderstandings that may arise when people do not agree on word meanings, or even do not know the (basic and) consensual meanings of words.

**104** *Über die Richtigkeit der Ausdrücke* (Deichgräber 1956, 11), *Acerca de su correcto uso* (T. Martínez Manzano [ed.], Madrid [BCG 301], 2002, *ad Ord. Lib. Prop.* [19.61 K]), or *Sur le bon usage* (V. Boudon-Millot [ed.: see fn. 4], *ad Lib. Prop.* 14.21 [19.44 K]; *Ord. Lib. Prop.* 5.6 [19.61 K], with n. *ad loc.*).

**105** This misconception does not exclude, of course, a bad usage of words, as shown by a passage of the *Differences of Pulses*, clearly linking these two shortcomings: κᾶπειτ’ ἐξελεγχόμενοι, πρῶτον μὲν ὅτι περὶ ὀνόματος, οὐ περὶ πράγματός ἐστιν ἡ ζήτησις, ἔπειθ’ ὅτι κακῶς αὐτοὶ κέχρηται τοῖς ὀνόμασιν “and then, when they are confuted, first because the research pertains to a word, and not to the matter, then because they themselves use words badly” (*Diff. Puls.* 2.5 [8.589 K]).

**106** See *supra* § 2 (Introduction) and fn. 70.

**107** On the link between the reflections on correctness of names and those on meanings, see *infra* § 2.4, esp. fn. 122–123; 149.

That the treatise *On the Correctness of Names* presumably may have given a general survey on the very question of adequacy between names and things is moreover corroborated by the fact that the question of “correct usage,” τὸ ὀρθῶς ὀνόμασι χρῆσθαι *uel sim.*, is indeed the subject of another treatise, *On Medical Names* (Περὶ τῶν ἱατρικῶν ὀνομάτων), as Galen recalls in the *Critical Days*<sup>108</sup> and on several other occasions:

εἰρήται δ' ἐπὶ πλεον ὑπὲρ ἀπάντων τῶν ἱατρικῶν ὀνομάτων ἐτέρωθι, καὶ ὅστις ὀρθῶς αὐτοῖς βούλεται χρῆσθαι, τὴν πραγματείαν ἐκείνην ἀναλεγέσθω.

More has been said on all these medical names elsewhere, so if someone wishes to use them correctly, let him read that treatise.<sup>109</sup>

Therefore, the distinction put forward by B. Morison between “two types of linguistic appropriateness which Galen mentions” in the passage of the treatise *On Critical Days* quoted above, the ‘external’ correctness (“the correctness of a name”) and the ‘internal’ correctness (“the customary usage of a name”),<sup>110</sup> is illuminating for explanatory purposes, but could be misleading, since ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης, in Galen, only refers to ‘external’ correctness—in keeping with a tradition going back to Plato.

**108** Ἡμεῖς δὲ ὅπως μὲν ἂν τις ἄριστα χρῶτο τοῖς ἱατρικοῖς ὀνόμασιν, ἐτέρωθι δεδηλώκαμεν “but we have shown elsewhere how one should use medical terms in the best way” (*Di. Dec.* 1.4 [9.789 K], quoted *supra* § 2.2 and fn. 97). A thorough study of the 11 occurrences of the phrase ἱατρικὰ ὀνόματα in Galenic texts (in 10 passages of 9 different treatises) shows that they all refer to the *Medical Names*.

**109** *Morb. Diff.* 5.4 (6.852 K), transl. I. Johnston, Cambridge, 2006. Similarly, *Symp. Diff.* 1.5 (7.45 K), ed. B. Gundert, Berlin (CMG V 5, 1), 2009; transl. (modified) Johnston, Cambridge, 2006: “Ὅτι δὲ οὕτως σύνηθες ὀνομάζειν τοῖς Ἕλλησιν, ἐν τῇ τῶν ἱατρικῶν ὀνομάτων πραγματείᾳ δέδεικται “That it was customary for the Greeks to name things in this way has been shown in the work *On Medical Names*.” See further *Meth. Med.* 1.5 (10.41–42 K), transl. I. Johnston & G.H.R. Horsley [see fn. 10], clearly linking the treatise with the question of the “customary usage of the Greeks,” ἡ τῶν Ἑλλήνων συνήθεια; and *ibid.* 2.3 (10.89 and 91 K). A thorough reading of the first book of the *Medical Names* [see fn. 55], which gives several insights on the role of the usage in general and on the use of the names of fevers in particular, confirms the summary given by Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq in his *Risāla* (n° 114, ed. G. Bergsträsser, Leipzig, 1925) and copied at the beginning of the text in the Leiden manuscript: “His goal here was to explain in which meaning physicians use the names they use” (*Med. Nom.*, fol. 84<sup>r</sup>, ed. J. Meyerhof /M. Schacht [Germ. transl. p. 8, l. 2–3]).

**110** Morison 2008, 130 and *passim*.

In any case, there is no way to ensure that the treatise *On the Correctness of Names* deals with “linguistic correctness”<sup>111</sup> or with “‘internal’ correctness.”<sup>112</sup> This related topic may have been incidentally handled by Galen,<sup>113</sup> yet it was obviously not the main subject of the treatise as envisaged by its author.

## 2.4 Galen’s discussions on the “correctness of names:” the issue of “meanings,” σημαίνόμενα

In this light, the passages where Galen agrees—although not without reservation—to engage in a discussion about the “correctness of a name”<sup>114</sup> whilst excluding the question of adequacy between names and things from the scope of medicine are of particular significance.

Notably, in his treatise *On the Function of the Parts of the Body*, describing the role of the pericardium, Galen observes that it will not be considered “rightly named” χιτών ‘tunic’<sup>115</sup> by “he who is anxious about correctness of names” (οὐ χιτών δικαίως ἂν ὀνομασθῆσόμενος, ὅτῳ φροντὶς ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος), because it leaves free space for the heart to dilate; “it rather surrounds the heart like some kind of house or secure fence” (ἀλλ’ οἷον οἶκός τις μᾶλλον ἢ ἔρκος ἀσφαλὲς τῇ καρδίᾳ περιβεβλημένος).<sup>116</sup>

Yet the ground for having consented to such an analysis is disclosed a few lines further: Galen stresses, as usual, that he is not concerned by the issue of

**111** As implied by Hankinson 1994, 173; see also 175 (“making a fuss, in at least some cases, over what you should properly call things”).

**112** As supposed by Morison (2008, 138): “In *On the correctness of names*, Galen must have said something like the following: words cannot be relied on to reflect the essence of the things they name so you should not worry about (external) correctness, but you *should* endeavour to follow Greek usage and respect (internal) correctness.”

**113** In a similar way to *Medical Names* [see fn. 55], focusing on usage (see *supra* and fn. 108–109), but also dealing, *inter alia*, with the distinction between names and things (see esp. *Med. Nom.*, fol. 84<sup>v</sup>–89<sup>v</sup>), as Galen himself points out: “However, as such researches pertain to names rather than things (ἐπειδὴ περὶ ὀνομάτων μᾶλλον ἢ πραγμάτων αἱ τοιαῦται ζητήσεις εἰσὶν), I don’t esteem worthy to spend time on these questions. On the subject of medical names is specifically written another treatise (γέγραπται γὰρ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱατρικῶν ὀνομάτων ἰδίᾳ καθ’ ἑτέραν πραγματείαν), in which I also entirely demonstrated and defined which are the controversies (ἀμφισβητήσεις) pertaining to things, and which are those pertaining to names” (*Diff. Feb.* 2.9 [7.367–368 K]).

**114** As noticed by Morison 2008, 127–129.

**115** On this metaphorical designation, see Skoda 1988, 114–116.

**116** *Usu Part.* 6.16 (3.488 K), ed. G. Helmreich [see fn. 72].

names (ὁ περικάρδιος οὗτος, εἴτε χιτῶν εἴθ' ὑμὴν εἴτ' οἶκος εἴθ' ὅ τι καὶ βούλει καλεῖν “this pericardium, whether one calls it ‘tunic’ or ‘membrane’ or ‘house’ or how he wishes”).<sup>117</sup> His concern is precisely the potential mistake about the nature of pericardium, if someone assumes, on the basis of an “additional belief” (τὸ προσδοξαζόμενον)<sup>118</sup> attached to the name χιτῶν, that it adheres to the heart.

Hence the reason why the physician should refrain from the question of correctness of names is precisely what drives him to address this issue: because of the existence of “additional beliefs,” τὰ προσδοξαζόμενα, he is forced, in his teaching, to mention cases where a word could mislead regarding the medical matter to which it is referring.

This concern for “meanings,” σημαίνόμενα,<sup>119</sup> appears in numerous passages of Galen’s writings involving a discussion about the “correctness of a name,” which can be identified by the association of a form of the verb ‘to name’ (ὀνομάζειν, προσαγορεύειν) with an adverb such as ὀρθῶς ‘correctly,’ but also, *inter alia*, δικάως ‘rightly’ (as in the case of the analysis of χιτῶν in the *Utility of the Parts*)<sup>120</sup> or καλῶς ‘well.’<sup>121</sup>

For example, in the treatise *On the Capacities [and Mixtures] of Simple Drugs*, Galen points out that “most people, since they are used to using names cat-achrestically (καταχρησθαι τοῖς ὀνόμασιν),<sup>122</sup> incorrectly name what constitutes a hindrance to cooling *heating* (τὸ κωλυτικὸν τοῦ ψύχεσθαι θερμαῖνον ὀνομάζουσιν οὐκ ὀρθῶς).” Indeed, “to hinder coldness” (κωλύειν τὸ ψυχρόν) is different from “to supply heat from oneself to someone” (ἐξ αὐτοῦ τινι παρέχειν θερμασίαν). Hence “one should not say of any object provided with the same heat as us, according to a precise language, neither that it warms us, nor that it cools us down” (ταῦτα κατὰ μὲν τὸν ἀκριβῆ λόγον οὔτε θερμαίνειν ἡμᾶς οὔτε ψύχειν λεκτέον). However, this observation obviously appears to be linked with his concern for “meanings,” σημαίνόμενα, as Galen stresses twice in this passage: “One should concede that they give names as they wish, but in no case concede moreover that

117 *Ibid.*

118 See *supra* § 2.1 and fn. 96.

119 To be connected with the purpose of the *Words in Attic prose-writers*, “for the sake of meanings” (διὰ τὰ σημαίνόμενα), according to Galen’s wording in the conclusion of the treatise *On the Order of [His] Own Books*: see *supra* § 2.3 and fn. 102–103.

120 See also *infra* and fn. 148.

121 See e.g., in the *Differences of Pulses* (see *supra* § 2.1 and fn. 81), the association of the statements “men do not send those who do not name things well (τοὺς μὴ καλῶς ὀνομάζοντας) to the doctor” and “this branch of knowledge does not concern the correctness of names, but of things.”

122 On this translation of καταχρησθαι (τοῖς ὀνόμασιν), see *supra*, Introduction and fn. 8.

there is the same signification of the word *to heat* in each of the two utterances” (ὀνομάζουσιν μὲν οὖν αὐτοῖς συγχωρητέον ὡς ἂν ἐθέλωσιν, ταυτὸν δὲ σημαίνειν ἐκ τοῦ θερμαίνειν ῥήματος ἐν ἑκατέρᾳ τῇ ῥήσει κατ’ οὐδένα τρόπον ἔτι συγχωρητέον); “If someone wishes to make a catachrestic use, one should concede to that, as long as it is recalled that in the utterance, the meaning is different” (εἰ δὲ καταχρησθῆναι τις βούλοιτο συγχωρητέον, ἀναμνήσκοντα μόνον ἐν τῇ ῥήσει τὴν διαφορὰν τῶν σημαινομένων).<sup>123</sup>

Another prime example is provided by the name of the ‘carotid arteries,’ καρωτίδες.<sup>124</sup> The fact that “the pair of the large arteries” produced by the division of “the straight artery, ascending from the thorax and rising above the clavicles,” where “reaching the midpoint of the throat,” “are incorrectly called ‘carotids’” (οὐκ ὀρθῶς μὲν ὀνομάζονται καρωτίδες), as Galen recalls in the *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, does not prevent the physician from using this name which “has by now prevailed” (ἤδη κρατεῖ τοῦνομα), even if this prevalence is due to “the great ignorance of all philosophers and physicians since Hippocrates” (διὰ τὴν πολλὴν ἄνοιαν ἀπάντων τῶν μεθ’ Ἱπποκράτην φιλοσόφων τε καὶ ἰατρῶν);<sup>125</sup> but it compels him to explain the misconception of the name-givers in order to preserve his readers from the same misconception:

The animal (τὸ ζῷον) does not become stupefied (καρῶδες) even after you cut the nerves, much less the arteries. It becomes voiceless (ἄφωνον) when the nerves have been damaged, but not when the arteries are, and still less when the veins have been damaged. But most

**123** *Simpl. Med. Temp. & Fac.* 2.24 (11.527–528 K). On Galen’s handling of ‘catachresis’ in this passage, see Rousseau 2017b, § 36.

**124** See e.g. Manetti 2003, 205, fn. 90; Morison 2008, who quotes this term as example of “misnomer.”

**125** *Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 1.7.31–33 (5.195 K), ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15]. Even though he says ἐν δὲ τῷ παρόντι λόγῳ τοῦ γε ὀνόματος οὐ φθονήσω ταῖς ἀρτηρίαις, ἀλλ’ ὀνομαζέσθωσαν ἔτι καὶ νῦν καρωτίδες “but in the present account I shall not begrudge the name to the arteries; let them even now be called ‘carotids’” (*ibid.*), the fact that this name is in use makes it clear that Galen has no intention of advocating another name (on the precedence of usage, see *supra* § 1.2 and fn. 57–62); καρωτίς is indeed attested not only in the other books of the *Doctrines* (2.6.4 & 5 [5.263 K]; 7.1.19 [5.592 K]; 7.3.25 & 26 [5.607 K]), but also widely in other treatises, mostly accompanied by a cautious phrase “the so-called” such as αἱ καρωτίδες ὀνομαζόμεναι “the so-called ‘carotids’” (*Ven. art. diss.* 9.12 [2.819 K], ed. I. Garofalo, Paris [CUF 459], 2008), αἱ καρωτίδες λεγόμεναι ἀρτηρίαι “the arteries called ‘carotids’” (*Usu Puls.* 2.1 [5.154 K], transl. D.J. Furley & J.S. Wilkie, Princeton N.J., 1984), or τὸ [...] ζεύγος τῶν ἀρτηριῶν [...] ὃ καλοῦσι [...] ἐκ παλαιοῦ καρωτίδας “the pair of arteries that are from ancient times called ‘carotids’” (*Usu Part.* 16.12 [4.332 K], ed. G. Helmreich [see fn. 72]). On the different meanings of the phrase “the so-called” *uel sim.* according to Galen, see *In Hipp. Acut. Morb. Vict.* 3.24 Helmreich (15.676–677 K), quoted by Manetti (2003, 201 and fn. 79), and my forthcoming study “Guillemets’ hippocratiques.”

physicians and philosophers (οἱ πλεῖστοι τῶν ἱατρῶν τε καὶ φιλοσόφων), who intercepted the nerves along with the arteries by their ligatures (ἅμα ταῖς ἀρτηρίαις τὰ νεῦρα τοῖς βρόχοις διαλαμβάνοντες) and then saw the animal immediately become voiceless, thought that the effect was the work of the arteries and called it ‘stupor’ (κάρος)—wrongly, in my opinion, unless perhaps they mean to give the name *stupor* to voicelessness (ἄφωνία). In that case their error here would be only in the name (οὕτω γὰρ ἂν ὀνόματι μόνον σφάλλοιντο); but they would be mistaken about the reality (περὶ δὲ τὸ πρᾶγμα αὐτὸ ἀμαρτάνοιεν) itself if they should suppose that the animal becomes voiceless when the arteries are intercepted.<sup>126</sup>

Galen’s demonstration misses the point, as men are not endowed with the arterial network called δικτυοειδὲς πλέγμα ‘net-like plexus’ by Herophilus (and known as *rete mirabile* after Galen’s phrase θαυμαστὸν πλέγμα) which can be observed in ruminants.<sup>127</sup> Modern experiments eventually demonstrated that the long-known fact that pressure on carotids may cause unconsciousness<sup>128</sup> is explained by the presence of sensory receptors within the arterial wall of the carotid.<sup>129</sup> Nevertheless, Galen is right in showing how the name reflects the “additional beliefs” of the name-givers—thereby following Rufus of Ephesus:

καρωτίδας δὲ τὰς διὰ τοῦ τραχήλου κοίλας ὠνόμαζον πάλοι, ὅτι πιεζόντων καρώδεις καὶ ἄφωνοι ἐγίνοντο· ὥφθη δὲ νῦν τὸ πάθημα οὐ τῶν ἀρτηριῶν, ἀλλὰ νεύρων αἰσθητικῶν πεφυκῶτων πλησίον· ὥστε εἰ ἐθέλοις μεταθεῖναι τοῦνομα, οὐκ ἂν ἀμαρτάνοις.

<sup>126</sup> *Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 2.6.16–17 (5.266–267 K), ed. & transl. Ph. De Lacy [see fn. 15].

<sup>127</sup> See *inter alia* von Staden (1989, 158–159); Frampton (2008, 179–189), who notes (p. 185) that “Andreas Vesalius (1514–64) was perhaps the first Renaissance anatomist to discern some of the anatomical discrepancies between the *rete* in animals and the corresponding arterial structure in man, although his understanding of both was far from complete.”

<sup>128</sup> The antiquity of this observation is illustrated by the 31st metope from the south side of the Parthenon in Athens, which depicts “a centaur applying left carotid compression to the neck of a Lapith warrior” (see e.g. Thompson 1997, 131), or the testimony of Aristotle, who notes that “those who have the veins (vessels) in the neck compressed become unconscious” (οἱ τὰς ἐν τῷ αὐχένι φλέβας καταλαμβάνόμενοι ἀναίσθητοι γίνονται: *Somn. Vig.* 455b, transl. W.S. Hett, Cambridge Mass./London [LCL 288], 1936). However, Aristotle’s statement does not imply, as Heymans (1967, 189) puts it, that “the term was already used in anatomy before Aristotle;” according to the evidence provided by transmitted texts, it first occurs in Rufus—who presents it nonetheless as a well-established name (see *infra* and fn. 130).

<sup>129</sup> The explanation of the phenomenon called ‘carotid sinus reflex’ is due to the studies of Hering, Koch, Heymans and de Castro on the ‘carotid sinus’ (“the dilated portion of the bifurcating common carotid artery;” Weiss/Baker 1933, 299; see also Webster/Gurdjian 1958, 376); the signals from these now called ‘arterial baroreceptors,’ localised in the arterial wall of the carotid sinus, are transmitted through branches of the glossopharyngeal nerve back to the central nervous system (Milnor 1990, 226–227).



The large vessels that pass through the neck were long ago named *carotids* (‘numbing’), because when they were compressed, one became *numb* (*carōdēs*) and aphone. However, it has now been seen that this condition does not come from the arteries, but from the sensory nerves situated nearby so that if one wished to change this name, one would not make any mistake.<sup>130</sup>

The corollary claim expressed here by Rufus, that changing the name would not be inappropriate, is usually implied in Galen’s reasoning, but rejected on the ground that observance of usage should precede all other considerations.<sup>131</sup> However, Galen occasionally proposes another name to replace the term deemed inappropriate to the reality it refers to. Thus, in the treatise *On the Function of the Parts of the Body*, while assessing the correctness of the name χιτών, he not only uses οἶκος in an accurate comparison illuminating the very nature of the pericardium (“it rather surrounds the heart like some kind of house”), but also quotes it among possible names for this component of the body (“this pericardium, whether one calls it ‘tunic’ or ‘membrane’ or ‘house’ or how he wishes”).

Another striking example is provided in the fifth chapter of the third book of the *Differences of Pulses*. After a long discussion on how Archigenes handles the highly problematic word σφοδρός ‘vehement’ (along with σφοδρότης)<sup>132</sup> in his book on the “vehement pulse,”<sup>133</sup> Galen concludes by giving his own opinion:

**130** Rufus of Ephesus, *Corp. Hum. Appell.* 210, ed. H. Gärtner, Leipzig, 1970. Rufus’ and Galen’s statements show that the link between καρωτός and καρώω-ω ‘to plunge into deep sleep, numb, stun, stupefy,’ κάρωσις ‘heaviness of head, torpor, drowsiness,’ καρώδης ‘drowsy, numb, stupefied/causing stupor,’ and κάρος ‘heavy sleep, torpor, stupor’ (see *DÉLG s.u.* καρώω) seemed obvious to a native Greek speaker. The hypothesis of a direct link with κάρα ‘head,’ presented by Hyrtl (1880, 93–94) as “more accurate,” and taken over by Askitopoulou et al. (2000, 487), that would imply a first meaning anatomically correct (‘vessels that bring the blood from the heart to the head,’ ‘head-arteries’), then forgotten and replaced by a so-called ‘folk etymology,’ appears morphologically, semantically and historically less likely.

**131** See e.g. *supra* § 1.2 and fn. 57–62; *supra* fn. 125.

**132** Σφοδρός is chosen by Galen to illustrate, at the very beginning of his treatise, the great variety of definitions that may be given to one word, and the methodological error of all those who say “such a pulse is vehement” (ὁ τοιοῦδε σφυγμός σφοδρός ἐστὶ) instead of “such a pulse is called (καλεῖται) ‘vehement’” (*Diff. Puls.* 1.1 [8.494–496 K]).

**133** The ‘book’ (λόγος) ascribed by Galen to Archigenes under the name περὶ σφοδροῦ σφυγμοῦ (*Diff. Puls.* 3.1 [8.637 K]) or περὶ σφοδρότητος (e.g. *Diff. Puls.* 3.1 [8.643 K]) is obviously part of the whole ‘treatise’ (γράμμα: *Diff. Puls.* 3.7 [8.694 K]; πραγματεία: *Lib. Prop.* 8.6 [19.33 K]) entitled Περί σφυγμῶν ‘On Pulses,’ as Galen makes clear in *Diff. Puls.* 2.6 (8.591 K). Galen’s discussions on Archigenes’ σφοδρός σφυγμός cover the first five chapters of the third book of the *Differences of Pulses* (3.1–5 [8.637–670 K]).

even if he will, as always, comply with usage, and call σφοδρός the pulse “overturning touch, that is beating vigorously and offering resistance” (ὁ ἀνατρέπων τὴν ἀφήν, τουτέστιν ἰσχυρῶς τε καὶ ἀντιβατικῶς πλήττων), he concedes that if he had been given the opportunity to be the name-giver, he would have preferred another name, εὐτονός ‘tonic,’ because σφοδρός, according to Greek usage, also implies the idea of speed:

If we had been the first to be fully entitled to establish the names of medical science (εἰ μὲν οὖν ἡμεῖς πρῶτοι τὴν ὅλην ἐξουσίαν εἶχομεν τῆς θέσεως τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἰατρικὴν ὀνομάτων), we would have called such a pulse ‘tonic’ (εὐτονός), not ‘vehement’ (σφοδρός). But as it is already called ‘vehement’ by most people, we do not change the name (οὐ μετατίθεμεν τοῦνομα), although we know that among Greek people the name *vehemence* (σφοδρότης) is always said of a both vigorous and fast energy (κατ’ ἐνεργείας αἰεὶ λεγόμενον ἰσχυρὰς τε ἄμα καὶ ταχείας); for wrestling (παλαίσματα) is named ‘vehement’ when happening with both tension (συντονία) and speed, and men alike, when they act in a tonic and fast way, are called ‘vehement.’ And indeed, the lion’s species is unanimously named ‘vehement,’ because everybody sees that it acts with both tension and speed, so that if it had been in my power to establish the name, I would have named the simple quality of the pulses that are overturning touch and offering resistance to it ‘vigor’ (ἰσχύς), ‘strength’ (ῥώμη), ‘tonicity’ (εὐτονία), or used some other similar name, and I would have called the result of composition of this [quality] and speed ‘vehemence.’<sup>134</sup> Now, as the name *vehemence* became usual to most physicians in reference to one of the principal differences, I formed the opinion that one should not avoid it. Therefore I named, on the one hand, the pulse beating strongly (εὐρώστως) ‘vehement’ (σφοδρός), and on the other hand the pulse beating without strength (ἀρρώστως) ‘indistinct’ (ἀμυδρός), as it makes no difference to say ‘strongly’ (εὐρώστως), ‘vigorously’ (ἰσχυρῶς), ‘violently’ (βιαιῶς) or ‘tonically’ (εὐτόνως).<sup>135</sup>

In this passage, while proposing another name to replace σφοδρός and σφοδρότης, Galen does not explicitly call the “correctness” of these two terms into question; but this fact is clearly implied, as the passage occurs in precisely those sole preserved books which Galen expressly presents as devoted to this subject.

<sup>134</sup> I endorse the emendation of Janus Cornarius, who writes ἀν instead of οὐκ in the margin of his copy of the Aldine edition of 1525 (ThULB Jena: 2 Med. V, 2c, vol. 3, p. 19v): the transmitted text τὴν δ’ ἐκ ταύτης ἄμα καὶ τάχους σύνθετον οὐκ ἐκάλεσα σφοδρότητα “I (would) not have called the result of composition of this [quality] and speed ‘vehemence’” is inconsistent with the context; moreover, the translation of L.M. Pino Campos [see fn. 60] *ad loc.*, “habría denominado a la cualidad simple de los pulsos resistentes y repelentes del tacto fuerza, vigor, tensión o algún otro nombre similar, pero no vehemencia, porque está compuesta de tensión y de rapidez,” which takes neither the opposition between μέν (τὴν μὲν ἀπλὴν ποιότητα...) and δέ nor the structure of the clause into account, and presupposes a predicate to the direct object containing an article (τὴν δὲ... σύνθετον), is unconvincing.

<sup>135</sup> *Diff. Puls.* 3.5 (8.668–670 K).

Indeed, in the second chapter of the first book of the *Differences of Pulses*, after having lamented the “unnecessary research” of those who “struggle at length and endlessly for the correctness” of the name they have established,<sup>136</sup> Galen has announced that he would address the issue of the ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης in the following books, whereas the first book contains “all what is useful” for medical matters:

But for our part, here too, avoiding their nonsense talk (φλυαρία) and allowing them to disclose anything they wish, we shall keep to what is useful, save that we already announce that for people willing to learn thoroughly about the definitions applied to pulses<sup>137</sup> or even about the correctness of the names themselves, everything is written in the books following this first one (τοῖς βουλομένοις περὶ τῶν κατὰ τοὺς σφυγμοὺς ὄρων, ἢ καὶ περὶ τῶν ὀνομάτων αὐτῶν τῆς ὀρθότητος ἐκμαθεῖν, ἐν τοῖς μετὰ τοῦτο τὸ πρῶτον βιβλίον ἅπαντα γέγραπται). For this very book only contains what is useful (τὸ χρήσιμον), without handling any sophistical research (οὐδενὸς τῶν σοφιστικῶν ζητημάτων ἐφαπτόμενον): therefore, if someone even should wish to omit those entirely, he could. Indeed, for the other treatises (πραγματεῖαι), the one regarding the diagnosis of pulses (περὶ διαγνώσεως τῶν σφυγμῶν) and the one regarding their causes (περὶ τῶν αἰτίων), and also the one regarding the prognosis made through them (περὶ τῆς δι’ αὐτῶν προγνώσεως),<sup>138</sup> only this book is necessary. The other books have been written in consideration of the annoyances caused by the sophists (πρὸς τε τὰς τῶν σοφιστῶν ἐνοχλήσεις) and for the understanding of the writings of other authors (καὶ πρὸς τὸ παρακολουθεῖν τοῖς τῶν ἄλλων συγγράμμασιν), in full awareness of the meaning in which they use each name (εἰδότας καθ’ ὅτου σημαινόμενον φέρουσιν ἕκαστον τῶν ὀνομάτων).<sup>139</sup>

A thorough reading of the *Differences of Pulses* shows that Galen is actually sticking to this opening statement.<sup>140</sup> In the first book, he confines himself to terminological indications: for example, in his description of the differences of pulses

<sup>136</sup> *Diff. Puls.* 1.2 (8.498–499 K), quoted *supra*.

<sup>137</sup> See fn. 146.

<sup>138</sup> See *supra* § 2.1 and fn. 80.

<sup>139</sup> *Diff. Puls.* 1.2 (8.499–500 K).

<sup>140</sup> Within the framework of this study, I can only provide below brief insights into the content of this treatise regarding Galen’s views on language. I shall devote a future work to a comprehensive study on the subject, which is still to be done (the translation of L.M. Pino Campos [see fn. 60] does not highlight these issues: e.g., the sixth chapter of the third book is simply summarized as a “criticism of the so-called ‘full pulse’” [*ad loc.*], whereas it is recognized, along with the seventh chapter, since von Staden’s study (1995, 501), as “one of the more interesting extant theoretical discussions of metaphor between Aristotle [*Rhetoric*, *Poetics*] and Eustathius’ Homeric commentaries”).

regarding ‘tension,’ τόνος, he merely mentions σφοδρός, without any comment;<sup>141</sup> in the following lines, having observed that the differences of pulses regarding ‘the body of the artery,’ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἀρτηρίας, involve an opposition referred to as ‘full’ (πλήρης)/‘empty’ (κενός) “according to most physicians, and especially the most recent ones” (παρὰ μὲν τοῖς πλείστοις τῶν ἱατρῶν, καὶ μάλιστα τοῖς νεωτέροις), but as ‘hard’ (σκληρός)/‘soft’ (μαλακός) according to him, Galen does not pursue the issue any further, but simply indicates that “on the question whether it is more correct to name in this way or the other (εἰ δ’ ὀρθότερον οὕτως, ἢ ἐκείνως ὀνομάζειν), the person interested in this matter will be taught in the following books.”<sup>142</sup> The second and third books, indeed, contain detailed surveys, for example, on the words διαφορά,<sup>143</sup> σφοδρός<sup>144</sup> or πλήρης,<sup>145</sup> involving conclusions pertaining to adequacy between names and things:<sup>146</sup>

διὰ τοῦτο Ἀρχιγένης μὲν κακῶς τὰ πρῶτα γένη τῶν ἐν τοῖς σφυγμοῖς διαφορῶν ποιότητας ὠνόμασεν, ἡμεῖς δὲ ὀρθῶς καὶ ταῦτα καὶ ἄλλα πάντα διαφοράς, ὅθεν καὶ τοῦπίγραμμα τῷ λόγῳ παντὶ περὶ σφυγμῶν διαφορᾶς ἐποιησάμεθα.

Therefore, Archigenes badly named the first genera of differences of pulses ‘qualities,’ and we correctly named these and all the other ‘differences:’ hence we have entitled this whole discourse *On the Differences of Pulses*.<sup>147</sup>

τοῦ μὲν γὰρ σώματος αὐτοῦ τῆς ἀρτηρίας αἱ ποιότητες, ὡς ὀλίγον ἔμπροσθεν ἐδείκνυμεν, οὐ πληρότης ἀν οὐδὲ κενότης, ἀλλὰ σκληρότης τε καὶ μαλακότης ὠνομάζοντο δικαιότερον· τῆς δ’ ἐγκεχυμένης οὐσίας αὐτῆς τὸ ποσὸν ὀρθῶς μὲν ἂν τις ὀνομάσειε πληρότητα καὶ κενότητα.

The qualities of the body itself, of the artery, as we were showing a little earlier, would be more rightly named, rather than ‘fullness’ or ‘emptiness,’ ‘hardness’ or ‘softness;’ whereas

**141** “There are three of them: one is strong in terms of tension (εὐρωστος τῷ τόνῳ); it is called ‘vehement’ (σφοδρός). The other, strengthless (ἀρωστος), is named ‘indistinct’ (ἀμυδρός). The intermediate between them doesn’t have any proper name (ἴδιον ὄνομα); but this one also is referred to by means of a formula (ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦτον τῷ λόγῳ δηλοῦμεν)” (*Diff. Puls.* 1.5 [8.508 K]).

**142** *Diff. Puls.* 1.5 (8.508–509 K).

**143** See *Diff. Puls.* 2.10 (8.625–635 K).

**144** See *Diff. Puls.* 3.1–5 (8.637–670 K).

**145** See *Diff. Puls.* 3.6 (8.670–685 K).

**146** Whereas the fourth book is dedicated to an in-depth discussion of the definitions given by his predecessors.

**147** *Diff. Puls.* 2.10 (8.634 K).

someone would be correct in naming the quantity of the contained stuff itself ‘fullness’ or ‘emptiness.’<sup>148</sup>

We can thus conclude that, significantly, Galen sometimes agrees to engage in a discussion about the “correctness of a name.” However, he constantly claims that he does so with reluctance, because of his concern for “meanings,” σημαίνόμενα, as stressed, for example, in his discussion of διαφορά:

We have put in parallel many quotations, not because we were so concerned for the name διαφορά, but in order to show that the signification was manifold (ἵν’ ἐπιδείξωμεν τὸ σημαίνόμενον πολυειδὲς ὄν).<sup>149</sup>

The purpose of these discussions, which is to avoid misconceptions about facts, is summarized with a colourful comparison at the beginning of the second book:

This book does not claim to yield the same utility as the previous one: the same relationship as the one between hellebore or scammony and bread or meat can be found between what will now be said and what has been said. For the latter had the power to feed healthy minds, the former to cleanse bad opinions, just like diseases.<sup>150</sup>

This conclusion aligns exactly with what Galen says of his treatise *On the Correctness of Names*, which is intended to show “that etymology is an impostor:”<sup>151</sup> that names do not necessarily reflect the nature of things.

### 3 Does Galen practice etymology?

The question remains as to whether Galen also practices etymology in a positive way, despite his pronouncements against it. As a matter of fact, within such a framework, four mentions of etymology in various treatises<sup>152</sup> may seem somewhat surprising, insofar as they do not take place in a polemical context. Thereupon, in the absence of any explicit Galenic definition of etymology, it is worth trying to infer from Galen’s examples which type of explanations he considers

<sup>148</sup> *Diff. Puls.* 3.6 (8.683 K), transl. (modified) B. Morison 2008, p. 152. On the conclusion about σφοδρός, see *supra* and fn. 135.

<sup>149</sup> *Diff. Puls.* 2.10 (8.629 K).

<sup>150</sup> *Diff. Puls.* 2.1 (8.566 K).

<sup>151</sup> See *supra* § 1.1; 2 (Introduction); 2.3.

<sup>152</sup> I.e., those that occur neither in the *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* (see *supra* § 1.1) nor in the *Differences of Fevers* (see *supra* § 1.2).

etymological, in order to find out if any of his numerous explanations of words<sup>153</sup> can be regarded as such.

### 3.1 Four evocations of etymology in separate contexts

Only four passages, scattered throughout the whole Galenic corpus, provide, in a consistent pattern, an explanation of a word that Galen explicitly recognizes as etymological:

ονομάζουσι δὲ τὸν κατὰ τὴν ἡλικίαν ταύτην πέμπελον, ὡς οἱ ταῖς ἐτυμολογίαις χαίροντές φασι, παρὰ τὸ ἐκπέμπεσθαι τὴν εἰς Ἄιδου πομπήν.

And they call the man in this age an ‘outcast’ (*pempelos*), as say those who are fond of etymologies, from being *cast out* (*ekpempesthai*) on the road leading to Hades.<sup>154</sup>

κραιπάλας δ’ ὅτι πάντες οἱ Ἕλληνες ὀνομάζουσι τὰς ἐξ οἴνου βλάβας τῆς κεφαλῆς εὐδηλον. οὕτως γοῦν ἔνιοι καὶ τὴν ἐτυμολογίαν ἐποιήσαντο τῆς προσηγορίας ἀπὸ τοῦ κάρηνον πάλλεσθαι γεγονέναι φάσκοντες.

It is clear that all Greeks call *kraipalai* the harm caused by wine to the head. Some indeed have given the etymology of the name: they affirm that it comes from the fact that *the head* (*karēnon*) is *agitated* (*pallesthai*).<sup>155</sup>

μόνυχα δέ ἐστι τὰ ἀμφόδοντα, συνηρημένου τοῦ ὀνόματος, ὥς φασιν οἱ τὰς ἐτυμολογίας τιμώντες, ἐκ τοῦ μονώνυχας, ἐπειδὴ περ ἔχουσιν ὄνων ὄνυχας [*sic*].

*Mōnukha* are animals endowed with teeth on both sides:<sup>156</sup> the name has been contracted, as say those who hold etymologies in esteem, from *monōnukhes*, since they have *donkey* (*onōn*) *hooves* (*onukhes*).<sup>157</sup>

<sup>153</sup> See *supra*, Introduction.

<sup>154</sup> *San. Tu.* 5.12.29 (6.380 K), ed. K. Koch [see fn. 77].

<sup>155</sup> *In Hipp. Aph.* 5.5 (17b.788–789 K). See *supra* fn. 55 on the Arabic translation of this passage.

<sup>156</sup> The substantivized adjective τὰ ἀμφόδοντα does not belong to the explanation of the word μόνυχα, but is given as an alternative denomination, expressing another distinctive feature of solipeds (on the contrary, ruminants are fissipeds). Dictionaries translate ion. ἀμφόδων/ἀμφώδων ‘with incisor-teeth in both jaws’ (*LSJ*), ‘endowed with upper and lower incisors’ (*BDAG*), which fits the realia (ruminants lack upper incisors, but have molars on both jaws); however, the Greek term is less precise, as ὀδούς (ion. ὀδών) only has the broad meaning ‘tooth.’

<sup>157</sup> *In Hipp. Artic.* 1.27 (18a.359 K). By a strange coincidence, the transmitted text makes sense, as donkeys belong to solipeds. But it would be more satisfactory, instead of ὄνων, to read a form of μόνος “single,” as already seen by Janus Cornarius, who writes μόνους in the margin of his copy of the Aldine edition of 1525 (ThULB Jena: 2 Med. V, 2e, vol. 5, p. 273r). The Latin translation

τὰ ἐξέχοντα τῶν χειρῶν ὀνομάζουσι θέναρα παρὰ τὸ θείνειν, ὥς ἔνιοι βούλονται τῶν χαίροντων ἐτυμολογίας. τούτοις γὰρ τοῖς ἐξέχουσι παίμεν ὅσαπερ ἂν παίωμεν. ἔνιοι δὲ οὐ πάντα τὰ ἐξέχοντα τῆς χειρὸς καλεῖσθαι φασιν, ἀλλὰ μόνα τὰ ὑπὸ τοῖς μεγάλοις δακτύλοις.

The prominent parts of the hands are named *thenara* after ‘to beat’ (*theinein*), as wish some of those who are fond of etymologies. Indeed, when we strike, we do it by means of these very prominences. Yet some say that not all the prominent parts of the hands, but only that the parts under the thumbs are so called.<sup>158</sup>

Even if Galen seems to deny any responsibility for the explanation in assigning it to “those who are fond of etymologies,” οἱ ταῖς ἐτυμολογίαις χαίροντες *uel sim.*, this explicit recourse to etymology still remains striking, as it appears unnecessary to the chain of reasoning in all four cases. The word πέμπτελος, which is evoked at the end of the fifth book of the treatise *On the Preservation of Health* as the name of the third stage of old age, illustrated by the example of the grammarian Telephus, “who bathed only twice or thrice a month” (because very old persons “are unable to tolerate frequent baths”),<sup>159</sup> follows two other names (those of the two first stages) occurring without any etymological explanation.<sup>160</sup> The three other appear in Hippocratic commentaries, among countless other explanations of Hippocratic words.

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edited by Cornarius (Basel, Froben, 1549) bears *solum unguem* (vol. 6, col. 961d). Chartier (Paris, Pralard, 1679, vol. 12, p. 307b) prints ὄνων ὄνυχας but translates *unum unguem*, followed by the equivalent μόνον ὄνυχα (this translation is taken over verbatim by Kühn [see fn. 1], 1829). Ancient scholarly explanations, to which Galen acts as a tributary (see *infra* and fn. 163–164), support such a hypothesis: μώνυξ· ὁ μίαν ὀπλήν ἔχων, μονώνυχος (Hesychius, μ 2061, ed. K. Latte, Copenhagen, 1966); μώνυχας ἵππους· ἀπὸ τοῦ μόνος καὶ τοῦ ὄνυξ ὄνυχος γίνεται μονόνυχας· καὶ ἀποβολῇ τοῦ ν καὶ κράσει, μώνυχας (*Etymologicum Magnum*, 593.9–11, ed. Th. Gaisford, Oxford, 1848). However, the manuscript tradition of the commentary on Hippocrates’ *Joints* (viz. *Par. Gr.* 1849; *Laur. Plut.* 74.7) does not show any variants at this place (I thank warmly Amneris Roselli for these data).

**158** In *Hipp. Fract.* 1.20 (18b.364 K).

**159** *San. Tu.* 5.12.28–29 (6.379 K). Galen refers here to a previous passage describing the healthy diet and lifestyle of this exemplary old man “who almost lived to be a hundred” (*ibid.* 5.4 [6.333–334 K]), probably to be identified as the contemporary second-century CE Stoic grammarian Telephus of Pergamum, tutor of the emperor Lucius Verus (Swain 1996, 55).

**160** In τὸ μὲν πρῶτον αὐτοῦ μέρος, ὃ <τὸ> τῶν ὠμογερόντων ὀνομάζουσι, δυναμένων ἔτι τὰ πολιτικά πράττειν “the first part of (old age), called that of sprightly old men, when they are still able to be involved in public affairs” (*San. Tu.* 5.12.28 [6.379 K], ed. K. Koch [see fn. 77]), the circumstantial participle more likely expresses time (as in Green’s translation [see fn. 78] *in which*) rather than cause (as in Kühn’s translation [see n. 1] *propterea quod*), so that it can hardly be considered an etymological explanation.

Furthermore, there is no obvious criterion for the choice of these specific words for etymological explanation. Infrequency, for example, cannot be taken into account: while πέμπελος, a *hapax legomenon* in Galen, is only found elsewhere in the Hellenistic poet Lycophron,<sup>161</sup> the others are well known in Greek literature, since Homeric poems (μῶνυξ and θέναρ) or since the classical period (κραιπάλη), θέναρ also being used by Galen. It is not impossible that these four examples merely reflect Galen's fine philological education and keen passion for culture;<sup>162</sup> in any case, they belong to traditional scholarship,<sup>163</sup> as they are found, very similarly worded, in lexica, scholia and commentaries.<sup>164</sup>

### 3.2 What is an etymological explanation according to Galen?

Whatever the answer to this (perhaps unanswerable) question might be, a review of the examples of explanations characterized by Galen as etymological does not give a clear idea of how etymology is meant.

At first glance, most of these explanations do not rest on connections within a derivational family. Admittedly, the case of πέμπελος and πέμπεσθαι may seem debatable, as the ending -ελος can be found in some other words, and in particular in verbal derivatives;<sup>165</sup> but this unproductive ending is far from working as

<sup>161</sup> Lyc., *Alex.* 682 and 826 (excluding grammarians, lexicographers and scholiasts).

<sup>162</sup> On which see fn. 2.

<sup>163</sup> On Galen's "profound, pervasive, often indirect and unspoken indebtedness to Hellenistic writers in a variety of domains, including scholarship on Hippocratic texts," see von Staden 2009 (quotation p. 155). In this respect, an interesting example of "the conditioning of the Alexandrian philological tradition" is given by D. Manetti (2003, 203, fn. 85): in the commentary *In Hipp. Artic.* 1.29 (18a.362 K), when μελεδόνας 'worries' is explained by τὰ μέλη ἔδουσαι 'devouring the limbs,' "the discussion seems to be a scholar excursus for its own sake," as "the word is absent from Hippocratic lemma." See also next fn.

<sup>164</sup> Galen's explanation of πέμπελος is found, *inter alia*, in *Suda*, π 958 (ed. A. Adler, Leipzig, 1928–1938) and *Etymologicum Gudianum*, π 458 (ed. F.W. Sturz, Leipzig, 1818); of κραιπάλη, in *Suda*, κ 2357 and *Etymologicum Gudianum*, κ 312; of μώνυχα, in Hesychius and *Etymologicum Magnum* (see fn. 157); of θέναρ, in Eustathius' *Commentary on the Iliad*, 2.84, § 553, ad 5.339 (ed. M. van der Valk, Leiden, 1976), and *Etymologicum Gudianum*, θ 256. As these Byzantine works draw on earlier sources, it is most probable that they share with Galen a common scholarly background.

<sup>165</sup> See Buck /Petersen (1945, 355; 361–362); Chantraine (1933, 243), who quotes five adjectives related to verbs: δέελος 'visible,' cf. δέατο; εἴκελος and ἴκελος 'resembling,' cf. εἰκών, ἔοικα; στυφελός 'solid,' cf. στύφω; εὐτράπελος 'changeable, witty,' cf. τρέπω; θέσκελος 'divine, marvelous,' cf. κέλομαι.



a suffix. The case of ἐγώ and ἐκεῖνος is clearer, as ἐ- and -γώ both lack of linguistic motivation.<sup>166</sup> Finally, the changes from κρατία to καρδία, κάρηνον πάλλεσθαι to κραιπάλη, ὄνων ὄνυξ to μῶνυξ and θείνειν to θέναρ all involve the addition, subtraction, transposition and substitution of letters or syllables which are characteristic of Stoic etymological practice.<sup>167</sup>

However, Prodicus’ interpretation of φλέγμα clearly involves a productive suffix:<sup>168</sup> for a native Greek speaker, the link between φλέγμα and φλέγειν/πεφλέχθαι is obviously as apparent as the one between πρᾶγμα and πράττειν/πεπρᾶχθαι<sup>169</sup> or πρόσταγμα and προστάττειν/προσ τετάχθαι.<sup>170</sup>

Yet the way in which this last example is understood is of particular significance, as the numerous explanations of words one can find in Galen’s writings apparently rely, as far as we can see, on connections between motivated terms sharing the same root. For example, in the passage of the second book of the *Therapeutic Method*,<sup>171</sup> the link between the name of the disease and “the damaged part” (πλευρίτις ‘pleuritis’<sup>172</sup> and πλευρά ‘side, flank,’ περιπνευμονία ‘peripneumonia’ and πλεύμων ‘lung,’ ἰσχιάς ‘hip ache’<sup>173</sup> and ἰσχίον ‘hip,’ ὀφθαλμία ‘ophthalmia’ and ὀφθαλμός ‘eye’), or “those who first cured them” (χειρώνειον ‘chironium’ and Χείρων ‘Cheiron,’ the centaur), or “those who were affected” (τηλέφιον ‘telephium’ and Τήλεφος ‘Telephus,’ the son of Heracles), is so obvious that it is not mentioned. Yet φαγέδαινα is explained with two verbs expressing the idea of ‘eating’ (ἡ μὲν φαγέδαινα πάντως ἐστὶν ἔλκος ἐσθιόμενον, ἢ ἀναβιβρώσκον, ἢ ὅπως ἂν ἐθέλῃ τις ὀνομάζειν “phagedaena is, in general, an ulcer that eats away or erodes, or whatever someone might wish to term it”), the first of which is a present root associated to the aorist root φαγ- by suppletion.

**166** Yet κείνος is an ionic and poetic form of ἐκεῖνος.

**167** See § 1.1 and fn. 38.

**168** On the great productivity of -μα, see Chantraine 1933, 190; Buck / Petersen 1945, 221–244.

**169** See *inter alia* Plat., *Symp.* 182a; *Lach.* 179d; *Alc.* 124e; Dem., *Chers.* 75; *Fals. Leg.* 77.

**170** See e.g. Plat., *Resp.* 423c; *Leg.* 926a; Ps.-Dem., *In Dionysod.* 41. Thus one can hardly agree with J. Jouanna (2009 [1974], 94–95, fn. 2) that “when φλέγμα became a cold humor,” the physicians “usually did no longer feel the connection between φλέγμα and φλεγμαίνειν” (my translation). As long as there is no blurring of its structure by a phonetic change, a motivated term remains indeed analyzable (and thus liable to reacquisition of semantic compositionality, i.e. remotivation), even if its meaning has evolved: see e.g. Rousseau 2017a.

**171** Quoted *supra*: see Introduction and fn. 13.

**172** This disease, characterized by severe pain in the flank, with cough and fever, could correspond to pneumonia as well as pleurisy: see J. Jouanna, fn. *ad Hipp., Epid. V*, 3.1 (5.204 Littré), Paris (CUF 407), 2000, with relevant bibliography.

**173** See fn. 11.

Similarly, ἔρπης ‘herpes’<sup>174</sup> is closely linked with the verb ἔρπω ‘to crawl’: Galen notices that this dermatosis, “leaving its former position, spreads to other [places]” “in the same way as a crawling beast” (δίκην ἔρποντος θηρίου), “as the name makes clear” (ὥσπερ τοῦνομα δηλοῖ). Likewise, the disease called ἐπινυκτίς ‘epinyctis’<sup>175</sup> owes its name to the fact that “it occurs at night (νύκτωρ),” ἀκροχορδῶν ‘thin-necked wart’ to the fact that “it is borne on the outermost surface (κατ’ ἄκρας τῆς ἐπιφανείας) of the skin,” νυκτάλωψ ‘nyctalopia’ to the fact that it consists in “failure of vision at night (τῆς νυκτός).”<sup>176</sup>

This passage of the *Therapeutic Method* could be seen as a special case, as it specifically aims at explaining the names assigned to diseases by the Ancients;<sup>177</sup> but many other observations on derivational links between motivated terms are found in Galenic texts;<sup>178</sup> in particular, all explanations introduced by the phrase

<sup>174</sup> See fn. 12.

<sup>175</sup> And not *epinoctis*, as translated by I. Johnston & G.H.R. Horsley: see *OED s.u. epinyctis*. This affection is obviously distinct from *eponychia* (*contra* Johnston & Horsley), as it has no connection with nails: see Rousseau 2016, 464–465 (on ἐπινυκτίς) and 235–236 (on the Hippocratic name of nail inflammation παρωνυχίη).

<sup>176</sup> *Meth. Med.* 2.2 (10.84 K), transl. I. Johnston & G.H.R. Horsley [see fn. 10].

<sup>177</sup> “The inconsistency of the names which those who first applied them assigned to diseases” (τὴν ἀνωμαλίαν τῶν ὀνομάτων, ἃ κατὰ τῶν νοσημάτων ἐπήνεγκαν οἱ πρῶτοι θέμενοι): *Meth. Med.* 2.2 (10.81–82 K), transl. I. Johnston & G.H.R. Horsley [see fn. 10]; “the anomalies aris[en] in the application of names by the ancients” (οὕτως οὖν ἀνωμάλου τῶν ὀνομάτων τῆς θέσεως τοῖς ἀρχαίοις γεγενημένης): *ibid.* (10.84 K).

<sup>178</sup> This remark, based on my personal reading, is borne out by several studies of Galenic word analysis: see F. Skoda (2001, 181 and 191–192), who shows through many examples (including, e.g., the linking of βηχίον ‘coltsfoot’ with βήξ ‘cough,’ ξιφοειδές ‘sword-shaped, ensiform, xiphoid’ with ξίφος ‘sword,’ ὀφίσις ‘ophiasis’ with ὄφις ‘serpent,’ or ἀλωπεκία ‘alopecia’ with ἀλώπηξ ‘fox’) that Galen “was able to highlight the word families:” “seeking the etymological links between the words, he probably also perceived the formation processes;” accordingly, he oftentimes “implicitly traces a derivational relationship pattern” (my translation). D. Manetti (2003, 212), reaches the same conclusion: “Galen’s etymological analysis is first and foremost focused on derived terms, and not on πρῶτα ὀνόματα (‘primary names’)” (my translation). If the case of some examples were debatable (as the explanation of μελεδόνας by τὰ μέλη ἐδούσας, referred to by D. Manetti (2003, 203, fn. 85) [quoted *supra*, fn. 163]), Manetti’s statement “first and foremost” (*soprattutto*) seems indisputable. See also, e.g., Morison (2008, 128): “it is important to observe that Galen’s explanation relies on the simplest of etymological decompositions of the word ‘*asplanchnos*’ and presupposes that the alpha privative and the word ‘*splanchnos*’ have a certain meaning (and remains neutral as to how they manage to mean what they do). In this respect, his explanation of the correctness of the word is of a slightly different character to (and a good deal more plausible than) the ones in the *Cratylus*.” On the characterization of these analyses of derivational and compositional patterns as ‘etymological’ from a modern point of view, see *infra* and fn. 183.

ὥσπερ τοῦνομα δηλοῖ/ὥσπερ τοῦνομα σαφῶς ἐνδείκνυται “as the name makes clear/clearly indicates” *uel sim.*<sup>179</sup> are of this kind.<sup>180</sup> Among other examples, in the commentary on Hippocrates’ *Aphorisms*, the disease name σπασμός ‘convulsion, spasm’ is linked to the passive verb σπᾶσθαι ‘to be torn, convulsed:’

ὁ σπασμός, ὡς καὶ τοῦνομα αὐτὸ δηλοῖ, σπωμένων ἐπὶ τὰς οἰκείας κεφαλὰς γίνεται τῶν μυῶν.

Convulsion, as the name itself also makes clear, occurs when the muscles are convulsed on their own heads.<sup>181</sup>

In a similar way, the compound adjective ὁμοιομερές ‘homœomerous’ is associated with its two components, the adjective ὅμοιος ‘similar’ and μέρος ‘part’ (through a derivative of the same root, μῦριον ‘portion, constituent part’):

ὁμοιομερές δέ ἐστι μῦριον, ὡς καὶ τοῦνομα αὐτὸ σαφῶς ἐνδείκνυται, τὸ διαιρούμενον εἰς ὅμοια πάντη μέρη.

A part is *homœomerous*, as the name itself also clearly indicates, if its division results in entirely *similar parts*.<sup>182</sup>

**179** About fifteen examples are found in the Galenic corpus.

**180** The same observation on the ‘indication’ (*dalāla*, viz. δῆλωσις or ἔνδειξις; see fn. 54) given by a word explicitly described as ‘derived’ (*muštaqqan*) is found in the treatise *On Medical Names*: “We deduce the meaning (*ma’ nā*) of this name (viz. πυρετός) in the language of the Greeks from what the word itself indicates (*min dalālāti nafsi l-lafzi*), namely that it is a name derived (*muštaqqun*) from the name ‘fire,’ and what the meaning of the name ‘fire’ indicates is that it is an abundant and burning heat” (*Med. Nom.*, fol. 103<sup>r</sup> [p. 17, l. 13–14], ed. J. Meyerhof/M. Schacht [Germ. transl. p. 31, l. 25–28] [see fn. 55], transcr. & transl. R. Alessi [see fn. 1]).

**181** In *Hipp. Aph.* 6.39 (18a.62 K).

**182** *Meth. Med.* 1.6 (10.48 K). It is not easy to ascertain the function of such a formula. At first glance, these two examples could be seen as involving the idea of adequacy between names and things. However, a review of all the Galenic examples of this formula (see fn. 179) shows that it is primarily used to explain the names themselves, rather than their relation to their referent; e.g., in another passage of the *Therapeutic Method*: ὀνομάζω δὲ ἀνομοιομερές, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦνομα ἐνδείκνυται, τὸ συγκείμενον ἐξ ἀνομοίων μερῶν “I name ‘non-homœomerous,’ as the name itself also indicates, what is made up of *dissimilar parts*” (*Meth. Med.* 7.6 [10.476 K]). In such a case, it is difficult to determine whether this formula also entails as a result, at least implicitly, that the name of a thing is appropriate to its nature, or simply means that the word is motivated—and therefore almost does not need to be defined. If so, even the examples like σπασμός and ὁμοιομερές might not involve the idea of correspondence between names and things.

Consequently, two quite different conclusions can be drawn when considering the examples of analyses regarded as etymological by Galen. If the focus is placed on the example of φλέγμα explained by means of φλέγω/πεφλέχθαι, one can infer that the connections involving derivational patterns between motivated terms sharing the same root were identified by Galen as etymological, and therefore that Galen largely practised etymology,<sup>183</sup> even if he never admitted to that.

On the other hand, if the account of φλέγμα by means of φλέγω/πεφλέχθαι, ascribed to Prodicus and not taken over by Galen, is regarded as an exception,<sup>184</sup> one can conclude that since the explanations involving motivated terms are hardly ever characterized by Galen as ‘etymological,’ what Galen means by etymology is not any kind of word explanation, but the practice of addition, subtraction, transposition and substitution of letters or syllables known as specific to Stoic etymology. If one assumes that Galen does not regard his own explanations as etymological, then there is no inconsistency, from his point of view, between being prejudiced against etymology and giving numerous word explanations throughout his writings.

In any case, this distinction between two types of explanations may not seem entirely satisfactory, as it involves the modern concept of linguistic motivation—and, accordingly, the distinction between synchronic and diachronic explanation,<sup>185</sup> which is of course foreign to Galen’s thought.

However, a distinction of different kinds of etymologies, as set forth in Varro’s *De Lingua Latina*—Galen would follow the Alexandrian tradition, rather than the Stoic one<sup>186</sup>—may also seem debatable: as granted by D. Manetti, the “field of application” of “Galen’s word analysis” is “very vast” and is not limited to “poetic words,” as among Alexandrian grammarians according to Varro;<sup>187</sup>

**183** Which is the case within the framework of a modern conception of etymology: see fn. 178; and also R.J. Hankinson (1994, 179), who labels as “etymological” Galen’s explanation of εὐεξία by its two components (εὐεξία μὲν γὰρ οὐδὲν ἄλλ’ ἐστὶν ἢ εὖ ἔχουσα ἔξις [*Thrasylb.* 5.824 K]: see *supra* fn. 16); D. Manetti 2003 (203: “It should be noted, in fact, that Galen quite often uses an analysis of words of an etymological type, both in comments and in other works;” 211: “Galen’s extensive use of etymology” [my translation]).

**184** On the possibility of discrepancies within the Galenic corpus between different treatises written across different periods for different purposes, see *supra*, Introduction.

**185** See e.g. P. Swiggers’ “minimal definition” *supra*, fn. 17.

**186** This interesting hypothesis, put forward by D. Manetti (2003, 211), leads to the conclusion that “it is certainly no coincidence that Galen’s etymological analysis is first and foremost focused on derived terms, and not on πρῶτα ὀνόματα [‘primary names’]” (2003, 212) [my translation].

**187** Manetti 2003, 211 (my translation).

moreover, there is no mention in Galen of different ways of etymologizing, whereas etymology is expressly referred to as a Stoic practice.

## 4 Conclusion

As is clearly expressed by the strong connection established between ‘etymology,’ ἐτυμολογία, and the question of the ‘correctness of names,’ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης, Galen’s fierce indictment against etymology has its roots in the Platonic dialogue from which it borrows its traditional subtitle. Indeed, the question of the “correctness of names,” which Galen, in keeping with tradition, understands as the question of adequacy between names and things, is excluded from the scope of medical practice (ἔξω τῆς ἡμετέρας τέχνης): endorsing Socrates’ conclusion at the end of the *Cratylus*, Galen points out that science (ἐπιστήμη) has to do with things (πράγματα), not with words (ὀνόματα). Hence, as is shown by a careful analysis of his mentions of etymology in polemical contexts, Galen does not blame etymology as such, but the inappropriate use of it as a premise (λῆμμα) within scientific research (in the *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*), or the inappropriate prominence given to it at the expense of customary usage (συνήθεια) when assigning meanings (σημαινόμενα) to words (in the *Differences of Fevers*).

This perspective leaves room for etymological practice—i.e. for assessments of the congruence of names with things—not only for the dialectician, for which it is the main activity (διαλεκτικοῦ μὲν γὰρ ὑπὲρ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος σκοπεῖσθαι), as stressed by the treatise *On Critical Days*, but also for Galen himself: he is regularly led, for teaching purposes, to highlight the discrepancies between names and things, in order to prevent his readers from the potential mistakes induced by the “additional beliefs” (προσδοξαζόμενα) that the name-givers may have attached to names, and/or in order to “cleanse” (ἐκκαθαίρειν) their minds “from bad opinions” (τὰς μοχθηρὰς δόξας), just as hellebore or scammony do in case of diseases. This very reason, given at the beginning of the second book of the *Differences of Pulses*, where Galen (as in the third book) explicitly addresses the issue of ὀνομάτων ὀρθότης, echoes the aim of his treatise *On the Correctness of Names*, namely to show that “etymology is an impostor.” This drives him to regularly observe the inappropriateness of medical words, when a word is likely to mislead about the medical matter to which it is referring.

In such a context, the four non-polemical quotations of an explanation explicitly recognized by Galen as etymological remain striking. As they belong to traditional scholarship, they may well merely reflect Galen’s deep fondness for

philology.<sup>188</sup> At any rate, the fact that Galen never endorses an explanation which he labels etymological, even in these four particular examples (assigned to “those who are fond of etymologies,” οἱ ταῖς ἐτυμολογίαις χαίροντες *uel sim.*), raises doubt as to whether he considers his own explanations of words—labeled as etymological by modern readers<sup>189</sup>—as such.

Yet this issue cannot be easily fixed: a negative answer may seem tempting, as all explanations quoted by Galen, except one, involve addition, subtraction, transposition and substitution of letters or syllables, which are characteristic of Stoic etymological practice. However, the fact that Prodicus’ explanation of φλέγμα by means of φλέγω/πεφλέχθαι, involving a productive suffix, also falls under etymology according to Galen leaves open the possibility of a broader understanding of this practice, including the numerous Galenic explanations of words that rely on connections within a derivational family.

Unfortunately, the extant texts do not offer further evidence. As regards the treatise on *Medical Names*, whose first book is only preserved in an Arabic translation from Syriac, the comparison with Galenic phraseology as well as the evidence of other Arabic translations of texts still preserved in Greek suggest that the terms alternately rendered by means of German *Wortableitung* and *Etymologie* in the available translation ultimately go back to a Greek phrase expressing derivation (παράγεσθαι, παρονομάζεσθαι, [παρωνύμως] ὀνομάζεσθαι ἀπό/παρά/ἐκ *uel sim.*)—except perhaps in a single instance of this treatise, featuring Prodicus’ interpretation of φλέγμα, if one assumes that both Greek words, ‘derivation’ and ‘etymology,’ standing in the same sentence, are rendered by terms based on the same Arabic verb.<sup>190</sup>

**188** And hence do not need to be considered as inconsistent with the other mentions of etymology: see the caveat on the possibility of discrepancies *supra*, Introduction.

**189** See fn. 183. This does not imply that modern readers agree with ancient explanations: according to modern etymology, there is no link between καρδιά and κρατία, πέμπελος and ἐκπέμπεσθαι, κραιπάλη and κάρα, or θέναρ and θείνω. Contrariwise, μώνυξ is analysed as a compound signifying ‘provided with single hooves, single-hoofed,’ in the same way as the Ancients did—except that instead of “\*μονF(o)-ονυξ with syllable dissimilation and compositional lengthening,” Saussure’s hypothesis “\*σμ-ώνυξ with an old zero grade of IE \*sem- (see εἷς ‘one’)” seems more probable (*EDG s.u.*; see already P. Chantraine 1977, *DÉLG s.u.*). The “semantic development” of φλέγμα, derivative of φλέγω, is “unexplained” for R. Beekes 2010 (*EDG s.u.* φλέγω), as it was already for J. Taillardat 1980 (“not resolved:” *DÉLG s.u.* φλέγω), despite the reference to Jouanna 1974, 92 sq. (see fn. 67).

**190** See *supra* § 1.2 and fn. 55; § 2.2 and fn. 98, on the highly improbable presence of ἐτυμολογία in the (lost) Greek text of the treatise *On Examining the Best Physicians*; full discussion in Alessi/Rousseau (forthcoming). If so, any comments on Galen’s views on etymology drawing on

In any case, the question of whether derivation, from Galen’s point of view, is included within etymology remains open. Therefore, since there are ultimately very few examples of explanations explicitly labeled as etymological in the Galenic corpus, a study of the status of etymology within the tradition of Greek medical lexicography, on which Galen is heavily dependent,<sup>191</sup> may shed decisive light on the question.<sup>192</sup>

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*Examining the Best Physicians* (e.g. Nutton 1990, 251–253; Morison 2008, 131) or on the *Medical Names* (e.g. Deichgräber 1956, 12–15; Manetti 2003, 202–203 [see fn. 98]) should be reconsidered.

**191** See, *inter alia*, Manetti/Roselli 1994, 1569–1633; Perilli 2006; von Staden 2009; Manetti 2015, 1192–1195; Perilli, Introduction of the edition, translation and commentary of Galen’s *Glossary of Hippocratic Terms* [see fn. 66], 102–108.

**192** This issue will be addressed in a forthcoming study on “The role of ‘etymological’ explanations in Greek medical lexicography.”

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## Part III: **Poetical Practices of Etymology**



Athanassios Vergados

# Etymological Explanations of Fish-names in Oppian's *Halieutica*: Between Poetry, Philology, and Scholarship

## 1 Introduction

Oppian's *Halieutica* is certainly not most Classicists' reading of choice. In five books and 3506 verses this didactic poem from the second century AD (published between 177 and 180, during the joint reign of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus) professes to teach its audience about ichthyology and the catching of fish. Among other things, it discusses the habitat and mating habits of various kinds of fish; which kinds of fish fall prey to each other; and technical aspects of fishing (e.g. what is the right season, what is the proper way of catching specific kinds of fish; what sorts of tricks do fishermen use to catch them; but also the hunting of monstrous fishes, κήτεα, such as whales and dog-fishes). Wilamowitz famously thought of the *Halieutica* as "terrifyingly boring" (*erschreckend langweilig*) and spoke of "insipid book-wisdom" (*abgestandene Buchweisheit*),<sup>1</sup> while for many years research on this poem had focused on the sources of the poet's information (*Quellenforschung*) or to textual issues, rather than enquiring into the poem's literary qualities. Thus, there exists a number of articles in which emendations to Oppian's text have been proposed,<sup>2</sup> as well as papers exploring, for instance, what the relationship is between Oppian's didactic poem and Aelian's *Historia*

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1 Wilamowitz-Moellendorf 1912 (3rd ed.), 255–256. Contrast Goldhill 2004: "It is a pity that Classicists are unfamiliar with Oppian and Ps.-Oppian. The fact that there are over 50 Byzantine manuscripts of Oppian extant indicates something of the popularity of the *Halieutica*... What's more, the *Halieutica*'s bizarre combination of tales of fish and eroticism, surprising myths and scientific curiosity, academic obscurity and odd folklore, should be meat and drink to post-modern literary critics. More traditionally minded scholars too should be taken by this Greek poetry written for Roman emperors—the *Halieutica* is addressed to Marcus Aurelius, the *Cynegetica* to Caracalla. It is a precious testimony of Greek literary culture at work in the upper echelons of Roman patronage."

2 E.g., West 1963, 58–59; Gow 1968; Giangrande 1970, a reply to Gow's article on textual critical issues, also with observations of a more general nature. On the *Halieutica* in general, see Effe 1977, 137–153; Toohey 1996, 199–204 (who treats the poet of the *Halieutica* as identical to that of the *Cynegetica*); Pöhlmann 1973, 869–872. Further, Wilkins 2008, 324–325; James 1969; Brioso Sánchez 1994, 273–277. The text quoted here is that of Fajen 1999a. An overview of the literature on the poem from the 1930s to 1999 can be found in Fajen 1999b.

*Animalium*.<sup>3</sup> Ancient audiences, however, appreciated the *Halieutica* more than modern ones, considering that it was used as a school-text in Byzantium; it was commented on, and scholia on the poem have been transmitted;<sup>4</sup> and there exist prose paraphrases of it which may have been used in an educational environment or may have aimed at making the content of the poem more accessible.<sup>5</sup>

Luckily, interest in the poem has been burgeoning in recent years,<sup>6</sup> and it is to this surge of interest in the *Halieutica* that I wish to contribute by showing that in Oppian there is often more than meets the eye. The poetry of the *Halieutica* repays careful examination. Not only will students of ancient zoology find something of interest in this didactic poem, but also the literary scholar. In what follows I will explore the use and function of etymological explanations of fish-names in the *Halieutica*. As the ensuing analysis will show, the etymological explanations help inscribe Oppian in a poetic, especially didactic, tradition in which this kind of explanation of names was *de rigueur*, as several studies have shown. Etymological explanation of (proper) names is a stylistic device used in Greek poetry already from archaic times.<sup>7</sup> Especially in the works of the poet perceived to be the founder of didactic poetry, Hesiod, etymology plays an important role since it contributes to the poet's claim to authority by suggesting that Hesiod not only knows a plethora of divine names and stories which he presents in a systematic, organized fashion, but also that he knows the reasons that lie behind the establishment of these names. While tracing the origins of the divine cosmos,

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3 Keydell 1937 posited a common source; see also Richmond 1973. The question has been most recently treated by Benedetti 2005. On the various prose and poetic authors who occupied themselves with fish-lore, see Zumbo 2000. Copious information on parallels between the *Halieutica* and Aristotle's biological works is found in the footnotes to Mair's 1928 Loeb edition.

4 For the scholia on, and paraphrases of, Oppian, see Bussenmaker 1849. Two manuscripts containing *sententiae* (Scorial. gr. 355 and Vat. Barberin. gr. 4) transmit several verses from the *Halieutica*; see Zumbo 1997. See further James 1966, 27–28.

5 Cf. Bürner (1911, 4) for positive evaluative statements on Oppian in late antiquity and early modern times. This positive reception of Oppian in antiquity is reflected already in the *vitae*, which however confuse Oppian with the poet of the *Cynegetica*; cf. the story that the Roman emperor awarded him a golden coin for each of his verses: *Vita* a (Westermann) ἔλαβε δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ ἐκάστῳ ἔπει ἥτοι στίχῳ χρυσοῦν νόμισμα; *Vita* b ἀλλὰ καὶ τοσαῦτα νομίσματα [sc. ἔλαβε], ὅσους εὐρέθη ἔχοντα στίχους τὰ ποιήματα.

6 See, in addition to the studies mentioned above, Rebuffat 2001; Bartley 2003; Kneebone 2008 and 2017; Lytle 2011, who argues for a ritual background in the description of the sargue (σαργός) in the *Halieutica*. Emily Kneebone's forthcoming monograph on the *Halieutica* is eagerly awaited.

7 See Schulzberger 1926; Rank 1951; Peradotto 1990; Paschalis 1997; Kanavou 2010 and 2015; O'Hara 2015; Vergados 2014 and 2020.

Hesiod also traces the origins of divine names. Etymologically correct names sometimes help account for the particular choice of a god's placement in the divine family tree. Etymology also allows us to reconstruct the poet's conception of language, as I argue elsewhere,<sup>8</sup> since, at least in the *Theogony* he seems to imply that there exists a 'correct' language that can adequately represent reality. Through Hesiod's influence on later didactic poetry etymology becomes part and parcel of didactic and epistemic discourse (esp. in poetry), and etymological aetiology often contributes the proof or explanation of the material being taught. While Oppian will emerge as a didactic poet who follows on the didactic tradition begun by Hesiod and reinvented by the Hellenistic poets, he will also be shown to interact with scientific sources on zoology/ichthyology, some of which are transmitted in a fragmentary state, especially in book VII of Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistai*, and may have been known to the poet indirectly through summaries.<sup>9</sup> Besides granting us an understanding of his interaction with scientific literature, the etymologies of fish-names also demonstrate Oppian's awareness of debates regarding the fishes he discusses in his poem and that he presupposes a certain level of knowledge on the part of his audience. More than simply showcasing his skill in presenting a 'dry' subject-matter in dactylic hexameters (a task which, notwithstanding his abilities, Oppian was certainly not the first to undertake), and more than engaging in a poetic *lusus*, Oppian's etymological discourse in the *Halieutica* sets out his expectations of an active reader and learner who is aware of the relevant debates, understands the epistemic value of etymology in formulating and 'proving' arguments, reflects on the poetic tradition, and is able to detect links both between different parts of the *Halieutica* to each other and between the *Halieutica* and other works, both in poetry and in prose.<sup>10</sup> As the ensuing analysis will show, these etymological explanations seldom fulfil only a single function (i.e. that of explicating the name of the fish in question); rather, they are links in a network of issues pertaining both to matters ichthyic and to epistemic questions.

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**8** See Vergados 2020.

**9** On zoological studies before Oppian, see Mair 1928, XXIII–XXXII; James 1966, 24–25; Rebuffat 2001, 21–28; Silva Sánchez 2016, 261 fn. 89, 265–266.

**10** On etymology in the *Halieutica* see the brief remarks in Rebuffat 2001, 108–109.

## 2 Fish-names reflecting outward appearance

On a basic level, the names of many of the fish that populate Oppian's sea reflect an important characteristic of their outward appearance. This is the case of the *κεντρίνης* (the spiny shark) as we find out at 1.377–138:<sup>11</sup>

τὸ μὲν κέντροισι κελαινοῖς  
κεντρίναι αὐδῶνται ἐπώνυμοι

One of these from its black spines is called Centrines.<sup>12</sup>

Oppian mentions this fish in the section on sharks (1.373–382), where he distinguishes between three types. About the first type which belongs to the sea-monsters he says nothing except that it is ἄγριον (wild). While the third type, the γαλεοί (dog-fish) is subdivided into three further types (σκύμνοι, λεῖοι, ἀκανθία), the second type (κεντρίναι) are accompanied by an explicit etymology through which the poet alerts his audience that the name *κεντρίνης* derives from the word for sting (κέντρον). Thus an obvious characteristic of the fish lies behind its name. The use of ἐπώνυμος as a marker of an explicit etymological explanation belongs to the typical meta-language of this phenomenon, familiar already from Homer and Hesiod.

The explanation presented here has not been invented by Oppian. Athenaeus (294d) transmits the following:

ὁ δ' Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν πέμπτῳ Ζῴων Μορίων (fr. 197) καὶ κεντρίνην φησὶ τίνα γαλεὸν εἶναι καὶ νωτιδανόν. Ἐπαίνετος δ' ἐν Ὀψαρτυτικῷ ἐπινωτιδέα καλεῖ, χείρονα δ' εἶναι τὸν κεντρίνην καὶ δυσώδη. γνωρίζεσθαι δ' ἐκ τοῦ πρὸς τῇ πρώτῃ λοφιᾷ ἔχειν κέντρον τῶν ὁμοειδῶν οὐκ ἐχόντων.

Aristotle in Book V of *Parts of Animals* (fr. 197) reports the existence of a spiked variety of dogfish, as well as of a *notidanos* variety; Epaenetus in the *Art of Cooking* refers to it as an *epinotides*, and claims that the spiked variety is not as good and smells bad. The latter can be recognised by the fact that it has a spike on its first back-fin, whereas the varieties that resemble it lack this characteristic.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See Strömberg 1943, 47. Cf. Opp., *Hal.* 4.243 (κεντροφόρων).

<sup>12</sup> The translation of Oppian's text is taken from Mair 1928, occasionally modified.

<sup>13</sup> The translation is that of Olson 2008.



This passage raises questions about the categorisation of these fishes, and it is unclear whether our κεντρίνης is identified with νωτιδανός or not.<sup>14</sup> It appears to be the case that while Aristotle, as reported by Athenaeus, includes the κεντρίνης along with the νωτιδανός in the category of γαλεός, Oppian distinguishes between γαλεός and κεντρίνης while omitting any reference to the fish's culinary properties, an issue that does not concern him at all. Nor does he insist on the specific localization of these spikes. On the contrary, Aristotle specifies that they were located πρὸς τῇ πρώτῃ λοφιᾷ, and Aelian *HA* 1.55 writes:

κέντρα δὲ ἄρα αὐτοῖς συμπέφυκεν τὸ μὲν κατὰ τὴν λοφιάν, ὡς ἂν εἴποις, τὸ δὲ κατὰ τὴν οὐράν· σκληρὰ δὲ ἄρα τὰ κέντρα καὶ ἀπειθῆ ἐστί, καὶ ἰοῦ τι προσβάλλει.

Moreover nature has provided them with spikes, one on their crest, so to speak, the other in the tail. And these spines are hard and resistant and emit a kind of poison.<sup>15</sup>

One can, furthermore, ask whether it is indeed necessary for the poet to present explicitly such an obvious etymology—a paronomastic wordplay would suffice. The reason behind the choice of an explicit etymology may lie in the fact that besides designating a type of fish the name κεντρίνης can also point to other animals as well: for instance, the scholiast on Nicander's *Theriaca* (l. 334) mentions κεντρίνης as an alternative name of the famous διψάς-snake whose bite causes intense thirst. In this case too an etymological link is established, with the name reflecting an aspect of the animal's appearance: ἦν καὶ κεντρίνην καλοῦσιν ἐπεὶ εἰς ὅξυ τὴν ὄψιν ἀπὸ ὀλίγου μέρους ἔχει κατηγμένην ὡς δοκεῖν κέντρον εἶναι (which they also call *kentrines* because its face turns narrower in a small part into a sharp point so as to seem to be a sting (*kentron*)). In addition, Theophrastus (*HP* 2.8.2) transmits that κεντρίνης is the name of a (gall)-insect (ψήν). Assuming that Oppian knew that the name κεντρίνης designates not only a type of fish but also an insect or a snake,<sup>16</sup> one could venture the suggestion that through his use of an explicit etymology he places particular emphasis on this fish-name in the context of his discussion of sharks in order to drive home the point that this name is

<sup>14</sup> This fish was named so because it apparently swims on its back (νῶτον); cf. Thompson 1947, 177.

<sup>15</sup> The translation is by Schofield 1958.

<sup>16</sup> That Oppian must have been aware that the same zoonym can designate different creatures, both marine and terrestrial, is suggested by the fact that several of the fishes that appear in the *Halieutica* bear names that designate land animals or birds (e.g., βάτραχος, ὄνισκος, δράκων, ἀλώπηξ, κορακῖνος, λέων, ἀετός, κόσσυφος); the two categories are explicitly compared with each other at 5.21–35. On such 'plural zoonyms', see Zucker 2006; cf. Strömberg 1943, 98–125.

properly used as a designation of a fish. While he underscores the name's correctness through this etymology, Oppian does not go so far as to describe precisely where the stings (κέντρα) of this fish are located, as the scientific sources do, but alludes to scientific discourse selectively.

Before we abandon our κεντρίνης to the depths of the sea where it belongs, I should like to point out another characteristic of Oppian's work, related to his use of etymology. In the the section on poisonous fishes of the second book of the *Halieutica* (422–500) Oppian introduces a cross-reference, as it were, to the etymology of the κεντρίνης that he presented in the first book. There are, he says, several fishes that are equipped with stings. A short catalogue of such fishes is presented in 2.457–461, which concludes:

κέντρα δὲ πευκήεντα μετ' ἰχθύσιν ὠπλίσσαντο  
 κωβίος, ὃς ψαμάθοισι, καὶ ὃς πέτρησι γέγηθε  
 σκορπίος, ὡκεῖαί τε χελιδόνες ἢ δὲ δράκοντες  
 καὶ κύνες οἱ κέντροισιν ἐπώνυμοι ἀργαλέοισι,  
 πάντες ἀταρτηροῖς ὑπὸ νύγμασιν ἰὼν ἰέντες.

Among fishes armed with sharp stings are the Goby, which rejoices in the rocks, and the swift Swallows and the Weevers and those Dog-Fish which are named from their grievous spines—all discharging poison with their deadly pricks.

Through κύνες ... κέντροισιν ἐπώνυμοι the poet calls to mind 1.377–378 with which 2.460 shares some of its wording. Oppian omits the name κεντρίνης since the reader is now able to supply it by himself, since he has already been instructed about this fish. But this is not a simple cross-reference: through the wordplay ἰὼν ἰέντες Oppian adds a detail that he had not mentioned earlier, the fact that these stings are poisonous: this is a detail found in Aelian's discussion on the κεντρίνης.

Other fish-names too are derived from an outward characteristic of the fish in question. Thus, the fish named *κορακῖνος*<sup>17</sup> acquired its name because of its dark colour, which reminds one of the raven (κόραξ), as we find out at 1.133:

κορακῖνον ἐπώνυμον αἴθοπι χροίῃ...

and the Crow-fish, named from its dusky colour...

<sup>17</sup> See Thompson 1947, 122–125 for the identification of the different kinds. For Strömberg (1943, 70–71) the name points to a group of fishes that acquired their names because of a certain sound they produce.

This etymology, however, should not be taken to imply a consensus between those interested in this sort of fish. To be sure, the etymology proposed by Oppian must have been current in antiquity: Speusippus, for instance, in the second book of his *Peri homoion* (fr. 14 Tarán) considered the κορακῖνος to be similar to the μελάνουρος, as Athenaeus 308d transmits, and the similarity is no doubt based on their colour. However, an alternative etymology is found in our sources, which points not necessarily to the fish's colour but rather to a different feature and may imply a debate concerning the meaning of its name. At 309d Athenaeus transmits that the κορακῖνος received its name from the fact that it constantly moves its eyes (διὰ τὸ διηνεκῶς τὰς κόρας κινεῖν). The link between κορακῖνος and κόρη goes as far back as at least Epicharmus who in his play *Hebes Gamos* (fr. 41.1) mentions the fish in the collocation κορακῖνοί τε κοριοειδέες: the κορακῖνοι are 'like the pupil of the eye', hence perhaps dark-gleaming (thus LSJ). While this connection goes back to the 5th c. BC (at least), the interpretation drawn from it differs: for some it points to the fish's colour, for others to the movement of their eyes.

The discussion on fish-name etymology provoked another debate on the correct form of the name (κορακῖνος vs κοροκῖνος), with scholars such as Aristophanes of Byzantium (fr. 409 Slater) maintaining that some of the names usually employed were 'incorrect': he taught, for instance, that the fish known as βῶξ should be called βόωψ (correctly) because it has eyes as large as a cow's (βόος ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχων). But names, just like any word, undergo changes over time, which results in their concealing their etymology; this, in turn, must be uncovered by the specialist. At least some scholars, then, wished to modify some fish-names in order to make them more transparent (βῶξ > βόωψ) by restoring them to what was assumed to be the etymologically correct form and thus to achieve ὀρθοέπεια.

### 3 The fish as a σῆμα, I: κάλλιχθους/ἱερὸς ἰχθύς

Sometimes the name of a fish is not properly etymologised but is instead paraphrased imprecisely. For instance, the gilt-head (χρύσοφρυς) is said to have obtained its name because of its beauty (ἀγλαΐη). The fish-name expresses this characteristic with greater precision than the paraphrasis through ἀγλαΐη (1.169).<sup>18</sup> Likewise, the name of the κάλλιχθους ('beauty-fish'), further qualified as ἱερὸς

<sup>18</sup> [Ovid] *Hal.* 110 *auri Chrysophrys imitata decus* is more precise in this respect.

ἰχθύς, is imprecise, and points to a heated debate regarding its identification (1.179–185):

οἱ δ' ἐν ἀμετρήτοισιν ἄλην πελάγεσσιν ἔχουσι,  
 τηλοῦ ἀπὸ τραφερῆς οὐδ' ἥόσιν εἰσὶν ἑταῖροι,  
 θύννοι μὲν θύνοντες, ἐν ἰχθύσιν ἔξοχοι ὁρμήν,  
 κραιπνότατοι, ξιφίαι τε φερώνυμοι ἢ δ' ὑπέροπλος  
 ὀρκύνων γενεὴ καὶ πρημάδες ἡδὲ κυβεῖαι,  
 καὶ κολῖαι σκυτάλαι τε καὶ ἵππούριοι γένεθλα.  
 ἐν τοῖς καὶ κάλλιχθους ἐπώνυμος, ἱερὸς ἰχθύς.

Others roam in the unmeasured seas far from dry land and commune not with the shores; to wit, the dashing Tunny, most excellent among fishes for agility and speed, and the Sword-fish, truly named, and the huge race of Orcynus and the Premas and the Cybeia and the Coly-mackerel and the Scytala and the types of the Hippurus. Among these, too, is the Beauty-fish, truly named, a holy fish.

Although this fish is called ἐπώνυμος (1.185), it is unclear to which characteristic it owes its name, and Oppian appears here to undermine or misapply the term ἐπώνυμος, which so often highlights the natural correspondence posited between names and things. As Athenaeus 282c ff. shows, authors occupied with ichthyic matters (among them poets) discussed intensively precisely which fish is the ‘beauty-fish’.<sup>19</sup> The designation of the fish as ἱερὸς is likewise problematic since already in Homer, where the term occurs for the first time, it is not clear whether it refers to a specific fish or to fish in general (*Il.* 16.407). While Aristotle (*HA* 620<sup>b</sup>33–35) furthermore equates the κάλλιχθους with the ἀνθίας,<sup>20</sup> this is not the case in Oppian (or in Dorion’s treatise *περὶ ἰχθύων ap.* Athen. 282c, for that matter): at *Halieutica* 3.190–192 this fish is clearly distinguished from the ἀνθίας. On the other hand, it seems that Eratosthenes, fr. 14H (< Plu. 981d) identified the ἱερὸς ἰχθύς with the χρύσοφρυς (εὐδρομῖην χρύσειον ἐπ’ ὀφρύσιν ἱερὸν ἰχθύν), while according to Pancrates (*SH* 598, from his θαλάσσια ἔργα) it was the πομπίλος (pilot-fish) that was considered to be ἱερὸς ἰχθύς, a fish which Oppian treats immediately after the κάλλιχθους and to which I shall return presently. The confusion surrounding the identification of the ἱερὸς ἰχθύς is reflected in the Schol. ex. *Il.* 16.407 where several possible meanings and identifications are

<sup>19</sup> See Mair 1928, liii–lxi.

<sup>20</sup> Ὅπου δ’ ἂν ἀνθίας ὀραθῇ, οὐκ ἔστι θηρίον· ὃ καὶ σημείω χρώμενοι κατακολυμβῶσιν οἱ σπογγεῖς καὶ καλοῦσιν ἱεροὺς ἰχθύς τούτους (“wherever an anthias is seen there are no wild fish; the sponge-divers use this as a sign and dive, and they call these *sacred fish*”).

cited: ἀνθίαν, χρύσοφρυν, κάλλιχυν, διερόν ('nimble'), μέγαν, ἄνετον ('uncontrolled'), πομπίλον, τὸν ἄνετον καὶ εὐτραφῆ ('fat').

The answer to the question why the κάλλιχθυς, whatever its precise identification, is also designated as ἱερὸς ἰχθύς is given towards the end of the poem, at 5.624–632, whereby the poet establishes yet another cross-reference:

ἀλλ' ὅτ' ἀεθλεύωσι μέγαν πόνον ἐξανύοντες,  
 εὐχόμενοι μακάρεσσιν ἄλός μεδέουσι βαθείης  
 ἀρῶνται κήτειον ἀλεξήσαι σφισι πῆμα,  
 μήτε τιν' ἀντιάσαι λώβην ἄλός· ἦν δ' ἐσίδωνται  
 κάλλιχθιν, τότε δὴ σφι νόον μέγα θάρσος ἰκάνει·  
 οὐ γάρ πω κείνησι νομαῖς ἔνι κῆτος ἄαπτον,  
 οὐ δάκος, οὐδέ τι πῆμα θαλάσσιον ἄλλο φάνθη,  
 ἀλλ' αἰεὶ καθαροῖσιν ἀπημάντοισι τε πόροισι  
 τέρπονται· τῷ καὶ μιν ἐφήμισαν ἱερὸν ἰχθύν.  
 τῷ δ' ἐπιγηθήσαντες ἐπισπεύδουσι πόνοισι.

But when they attempt to accomplish their mighty task, they make their vows to the blessed gods who rule the deep sea and pray that they ward from them all hurt from the monsters of the deep and that no harm may meet them from the sea. And if they see a Beauty-fish, then great courage comes into their hearts; for where these range there never yet has any dread Sea-monster appeared nor noxious beast nor hurtful thing of the sea but always they delight in clean and harmless paths: wherefore also men have named it the Holy Fish. Rejoicing in it they hasten to their labours.

The fish is ἱερὸς because it functions as a sign that the gods will heed the divers' prayers. This interpretation can also be found in Aristotle (see fn. 20), for whom, however, ἱερὸς ἰχθύς is a byname of the ἀνθίας. While the appearance of this fish functions as a σῆμα of vital importance to divers, it is nevertheless difficult to identify it precisely since we are not given a description of the κάλλιχθυς. Thus it is impossible to 'read' this σῆμα. The lack of precision here should not be attributed to Oppian's inability to identify the fish more effectively or his lack of access to sources that could provide him with relevant information: his description of the ἐχενήϊς shows that this is not the case.<sup>21</sup> It is possible that Oppian was aware of the debate concerning this matter and, by combining material drawn from different sources, he explained the by-name ἱερὸς ἰχθύς through a narrative that is reminiscent of Aristotle while at the same time showing clearly that his

<sup>21</sup> See below, p. 197–199, and cf. Rebuffat (2001, 34) who points out that this is the only detailed description of a fish's appearance in the *Halieutica*. This description is subordinated to the *ady-naton* recounted in the section on the ἐχενήϊς.

own view on the identification of the ἱερὸς ἰχθύς differs from Aristotle's.<sup>22</sup> In order to follow Oppian's train of thought, however, the reader must be aware of different viewpoints in ichthyological research. Once again, name and explanation are separated from each other in Oppian, who presupposes an attentive reader who can perceive such (unmarked) cross-references.

## 4 The fish as a σῆμα, II: πομπίλος

Another fish that functions as a σῆμα is the *πομπίλος*, discussed immediately after the *κάλλιχθος* at lines 1.186–211, which illustrates well the way in which the etymologies of fish-names interact with other important themes of the *Halieutica*:

ἐν κείνοις νέμεται καὶ πομπίλος, ὃν πέρι ναῦται  
 ἄζονται, πομπῇ δ' ἐπεφήμισαν οὐνομα νηῶν·  
 ἔξοχα γὰρ νήεσσι γεγηθότες ὑγρά θεούσαις  
 ἔσπονται πομπῆς ὁμόστολοι, ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος  
 ἀμφιπερισκαίροντες ἐϋζυγον ἄρμα θαλάσσης 190  
 τοίχους τ' ἀμφοτέρους περὶ τε πρυμναῖα χαλινὰ  
 οἰήκων, ἄλλοι δὲ περὶ πρῶρην ἀγέρονται·  
 οὐδέ κεν αὐτόμολον κείνων πλόν, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ δεσμῶ  
 φαίης εὐγόμοφουσιν ἐνισχομένους πινάκεσσιν  
 ἐλκομένους ἀέκοντας ἀναγκαίησιν ἄγεσθαι. 195  
 τόσσον ἔρωσ γλαφυρῇσιν ἐφ' ὀλκάσιν ἐσμὸν ἀγείρει.  
 οἶον δὴ βασιλῆα φερέπτολιν ἢε τιν' ἄνδρα  
 ἀθλοφόρον, θαλλοῖσι νεοστέπτοισι κομώντα,  
 παῖδές τ' ἡίθεοί τε καὶ ἄνδρες ἀμφιέποντες  
 ὃν δόμον εἰσανάγουσι καὶ ἀθρόοι αἰὲν ἔπονται, 200  
 εἰσόκεν εὐερκῇ μεγάρων ὑπὲρ οὐδὸν ἀμείψῃ·  
 ὥς οἱ γ' ὠκυπόροισιν αἰεὶ νήεσσιν ἔπονται,  
 ὄφρ' οὕτις γαίης ἐλάει φόβος· ἀλλ' ὅτε χέρσον  
 φράσσωνται, τραφερὴν δὲ μέγ' ἐχθαίρουσιν ἄρουραν,  
 αὐτίς ἀφορμηθέντες ἀολλέες ἢ ὅτε νύσσης 205  
 πάντες ἀποθρώσκουσι καὶ οὐκέτι νηυσὶν ἔπονται.  
 σῆμα τόδε πλωτῆρσιν ἐτήτυμον ἐγγύθι γαίης  
 ἔμμεναι, εὐτε λιπόντας ὁμοπλωτῆρας ἴδωνται.  
 πομπίλε, ναυτιλίῃσι τετιμένη, σοὶ δε τις ἀνὴρ  
 εὐκραεῖς ἀνέμων τεκμαίρεται ἐλθέμεν αὔρας· 210  
 εὐδία γὰρ στέλλῃ τε καὶ εὐδία σήματα φαίνεις.

<sup>22</sup> Likewise, Arist. fr. 191 (< Athen. 282d) considers the *κάλλιχθος* to have sharp teeth (*καρχαρόδους*), while Oppian (*Hal.* 1.253 and 3.328) describes its mouth as *ἄοπλον*.

And among them dwells the Pilot-fish which sailors revere exceedingly, and they have given him his name for his conveying of ships. For they delight exceedingly in ships that run over the wet seas, and they attend them as conveyers, voyaging with them on this side and on that, gamboling around and about the well-benched chariot of the sea, about both sides and about the controlling helm at the stern, while others gather round the prow; not of their own motion would you say that they voyage, but rather entangled in the well-riveted timbers are pulled against their will as in chains and are carried along perforce; so great a swarm does their passion for hollow ships collect. Even as a city-saving king or some athlete crowned with fresh garlands is beset by boys and youths and men who lead him to his house and attend him always in troops until he passes the fencing threshold of his halls, even so the Pilot-fishes always attend swift-faring ships, so long as no fear of the earth drives them away. But when they mark the dry land—and greatly do they abhor the solid earth—they all turn back again in a body and rush away as from the starting-post and follow the ships no more. This is a true sign to sailors that they are near land, when they see those companions of the voyage leaving them. O Pilot-fish, honoured by seafarers, by you a man divines the coming of temperate winds; for you put to sea with fair weather and you show forth fair weather signs.

This passage is interesting for several reasons. First, it follows directly on the presentation of the κάλλιχθς and the ἱερὸς ἰχθύς, just as the sources quoted in Athenaeus (282a–284f). Oppian explains the name πομπίλος through an explicit etymology and through a description of the fish's typical activity as observed by mariners, emphasized through the repetition of the term πομπή. At the same time, this passage on the πομπίλος illustrates some typical characteristics of Oppian's treatment of the ichthyic world. Thus, the fish's habits are illustrated by means of similes, whose imagery is drawn from human activity.<sup>23</sup> The relation between tenor and vehicle that we know from earlier hexameter tradition, and especially from Homer where similes illustrate and comment on the actions of human actors by comparing them to images drawn from the natural world (often involving animals), is thus reversed in Oppian. In doing this, he invests the fish with anthropomorphic qualities and human emotions, including ἔρως (line 196), a concept that has a wide range of meanings and is of central importance in the *Halieutica*.<sup>24</sup> In this case, the swarm of πομπίλοι is likened to the crowd that accompanies a king or another important person.<sup>25</sup> After illustrating the similarity between the two images, the poet concludes that the departure of the πομπίλος functions as a sure sign (σῆμα) that the sailors are approaching the land. And finally, the poet

<sup>23</sup> On Oppian's similes see James 1966, 32–36; Rebuffat 2001, 187–246; Bartley 2003, 207–301.

<sup>24</sup> On *eros* in the *Halieutica*, see Kneebone 2008; Konstan 2013 discusses the question whether animals can experience *eros*.

<sup>25</sup> Rebuffat (2001, 194–197) includes a detailed discussion of this simile, which is the first in the *Halieutica*.

apostrophises the personified πομπίλος by adding yet another sense in which the fish is a σῆμα: its presence forecasts fair weather. This apostrophe repays closer examination. Its opening is reminiscent of an apostrophe to the same fish in Erinna fr. 404 *SH*, quoted by Athen. at 283d (with doubts on its attribution):

πομπίλε, ναύτησιν πέμπων πλόον εὐπλοον, ἰχθύ,  
πομπεύσαις πρύμναθεν ἐμὰν ἀδεΐαν ἑταίραν.

Pilot-fish, you who provide sailors with an easy voyage, escort my dear friend, trailing her ship's stern!

Both poets apostrophise the πομπίλος; their apostrophies share the same opening (πομπίλε, ναύτησιν in Erinna's fragment; πομπίλε, ναυτ(λί)ησιν in Oppian), and they both include etymological links to πομπή and cognates in their verses. These similarities allow us to posit that Oppian may have had Erinna's lines in mind.<sup>26</sup> Thus a rhetorical characteristic of Oppian's poem, the direct address to a humanised and personified fish points simultaneously to a literary tradition surrounding this fish.<sup>27</sup>

The link between the κάλλιχθος or ἱερὸς ἰχθύς and the πομπίλος does not simply consist in the fact that both Oppian and the sources quoted by Athenaeus discuss them together. Oppian adumbrates that he is aware of the controversy of whether the πομπίλος is the ἱερὸς ἰχθύς: in his introduction to the section on the πομπίλος Oppian emphasizes that the sailors revere (ἄζονται) this fish more than any other. This verb, too, repays closer examination: ἄζεσθαι is often used in a context involving the divine (awe, reverence, respect towards the gods),<sup>28</sup> and its use here may imply that there is something that renders the πομπίλος ἱερός. The poet then leaves the identification of the ἱερὸς ἰχθύς suspended: it may be the κάλλιχθος as we find out later in Book 5 (even though we may not be entirely sure which fish is meant by this name), but there is also something ἱερόν about the πομπίλος, who is revered by the sailors and functions as a σῆμα, both in the sense that it indicates proximity to dry land and because it announces good weather.

<sup>26</sup> Other poets, too, apostrophise the πομπίλος (A.R., fr. 8 Mihaelis, Alex. Aetol., fr. 2 Powell, [Ov.] *Hal.* 100–101), often with some kind of etymological play, but such a close connection as the one detected here between Erinna and Oppian is not found elsewhere. On the *Nachleben* of Erinna's verses on the πομπίλος (aptly deriving from a *propemptikon*), see Zelchencko 2001. On the πομπίλος as ἱερὸς ἰχθύς, see Timachidas F 3a with Matijašić's commentary.

<sup>27</sup> See Rebuffat 2001, 113–123, on *prosopopoea* and *apostrophe* to the humanised fish.

<sup>28</sup> See *LSJ*, s.v.



## 5 Cross-references

As the discussion of the κεντρίνης and the ἱερὸς ἰχθύς has shown, the poet sometimes revisits a fish he mentioned at an earlier point in the *Halieutica*. Such cross-references may involve etymology. Fish-name and etymological explanation are separated in the case of the torpedo (νάρκη). In Book 1.104 we are told that the νάρκη possesses an ἐτήτυμον οὖνομα. Why the νάρκη's name is indeed 'true' (correct/appropriate) is explained in the second book (56–85):

οἶον καὶ νάρκη τερενόχροϊ φάρμακον ἀλκῆς  
 ἔσπεται αὐτοδίδακτον ἐν οἰκείοις μελέεσσιν.  
 ἢ μὲν γὰρ μαλακὴ τε δέμας καὶ πᾶσ' ἀμενηνὴ  
 νωθὴς τε βραδυτῇτι βαρύνεται, οὐδέ κε φαίης  
 νηχομένην ὀράαν· μάλα γὰρ δύσφραστα κέλευθα 60  
 εἰλεῖται πολιοῖο δι' ὕδατος ἐρπύζουσα·  
 ἀλλὰ οἱ ἐν λαγόνεσσιν ἀναλκείης δόλος ἀλκῆ·  
 κερκίδες ἐμπεφύασι παρὰ πλευρῆς ἐκάτερθεν  
 ἀμφίδυμοι· τῶν εἴ τις ἐπιψαύσειε πελάσσας,  
 αὐτίκα οἱ μελέων σθένος ἔσβεσεν, ἐν δέ οἱ αἶμα 65  
 πήγνυται, οὐδ' ἔτι γυῖα φέρειν δύνατ', ἀλλὰ οἱ ἀλκῇ  
 ἦκα μαραινομένοιο παρίεται ἄφρονι νάρκη.  
 ἢ δ' εὖ γινώσκουσα θεοῦ γέρας οἶον ἔδεκτο,  
 ὕπτιον ἀγκλίνασα μένει δέμας ἐν ψαμάθοισι·  
 κεῖται δ' ἀστεμφῆς οἷη νέκυς· δὲ δέ κεν ἰχθύς 70  
 ἐγχρίμψῃ λαγόνεσσιν, ὁ μὲν λυτο, κάππεσε δ' αὐτως  
 ἀδρανίης βαθὺν ὕπνον, ἀμηχανίῃσι πεδηθεῖς·  
 ἢ δὲ θοῶς ἀνόρουσε καὶ οὐ κραιπνὴ περ εὐούσα,  
 γηθοσύνη, ζῶν δὲ κατεσθίει ἴσα θανόντι.  
 πολλάκι καὶ κατὰ λαῖτμα μετ' ἰχθύσιν ἀντιάσασα 75  
 νηχομένοις κραιπνὴν μὲν ἐπειγομένων σβέσεν ὀρμὴν  
 ἐγγὺς ἐπιψαύσασα καὶ ἐσσυμένους ἐπέδησεν·  
 ἔσταν δ' αὐαλέοι καὶ ἀμήχανοι, οὔτε κελεύθων  
 δύσμοροι οὔτε φυγῆς μεμνημένοι· ἢ δὲ μένουσα  
 οὐδὲν ἀμυνομένους καταδαίνυται οὐδ' αἶοντας. 80  
 οἶον δ' ὄρφναίοισιν ἐν εἰδώλοισιν ὄνειρων  
 ἀνδρὸς ἀτυζομένοιο καὶ ἱεμένοιο φέβεσθαι  
 θρώσκει μὲν κραδίη, τὰ δὲ γούνατα παλλομένοιο  
 ἀστεμφῆς ἅτε δεσμός ἐπειγομένοιο βαρύνει,  
 τοίην γυιοπέδην τεχνάζεται ἰχθύσι νάρκη. 85

Thus the Cramp-fish of tender flesh is endowed with a specific of valour, self-taught in its own limbs. For soft of body and altogether weak and sluggish it is weighed down with slowness, and you could not say you see it swimming; it is hard to mark its path as it crawls and creeps through the grey water. But in its loins it has a piece of craft, its strength in weakness: even two rays planted in its sides, one on either hand. If one approach and touch these,

straightway it quenches the strength of his body and his blood is frozen within him and his limbs can no longer carry him but he quietly pines away and his strength is drained by stupid torpor. Knowing well what gift it has received from God, the Cramp-fish lays itself supine among the sands and so remains, lying unmoving as a corpse. But any fish that touches its loins is paralysed and falls even so into the deep sleep of weakness, fettered by helplessness. And the Cramp-fish, albeit not swift, speedily leaps up in joy and devours the living fish as if it were dead. Many times also when it meets with fishes swimming in the gulf of the sea, it quenches with its touch their swift career for all their haste and checks them in mid-course. And they stay, blasted and helpless, thinking not, poor wretches, either of going on or of flight. But the Cramp-fish stays by and devours them, while they make no defence nor are they conscious of their fate. Even as in the darkling phantoms of a dream, when a man is terrified and fain to flee, his heart leaps, but, struggle as he may, a steadfast bond as it were weighs down his eager knees: even such a fetter does the Cramp-fish devise for fishes.

In a narrative section marked by ring-composition Oppian explains why the fish acquired its name *νάρκη* and underscores the etymological aetiology through a further paronomastic wordplay with *ἀλκή* (strength) that suggests an etymology *κατ' ἀντίφρασιν*, according to which *νάρκη* may also derive from the negative prefix *νή-* and *ἀλκή*. When a fish is touched by the *νάρκη* it loses its *ἀλκή* and it finds itself in a death-like condition that allows the *νάρκη*, despite its *ἀναλκείη*, to devour its victim. The *νάρκη* then transfers to its victim the characteristics of its own constitution (*ἀμενηνή, νωθής*).<sup>29</sup>

Passing on to more spectacular fish, the name *ξίφιας* (sword-fish) is supplied with an implicit etymology at 2.462–469, this time through synonyms:

τρυγόνι δὲ *ξίφι* τε θεὸς κρατερώτατα δῶρα  
 γυίοις ἐγκατέθηκεν, ὑπέρβιον ὄπλον ἐκάστω  
 καρτύνας· καὶ τῷ μὲν ὑπὲρ γένυν ἐστήριξεν 465  
 ὄρθιον, αὐτόρριζον, ἀκάχμενον, οὔτι σιδήρου  
*φάσανον*, ἀλλ' ἀδάμαντος ἰσοσθενὲς ὄβριμον ἄορ.  
 οὐ κείνου κρυόεσαν ἐπιβρίσαντος ἀκωκῆν  
 οὐδὲ μάλα στερεὴ τλαίη λίθος οὐτηθεῖσα·  
 τοίη οἱ ζαμενῆς τε πέλει πυρόεσσα τ' ἔρωή.

<sup>29</sup> With his extensive description of the *νάρκη* Oppian amplifies the information found in scientific sources (e.g., Arist., fr. 222 < Athen. 314c: ἔστι δ' ἡ *νάρκη*, ὡς φησιν Ἀριστοτέλης, τῶν σελαγωδῶν καὶ τῶν σκυμνοτοκούντων· θηρεύει δ' εἰς τροφήν ἑαυτῆς τὰ ἰχθύδια προσαπτομένη καὶ ναρκαν καὶ ἀκινητίζειν ποιοῦσα, “according to Aristotle, the electric ray is one of the cartilaginous and viviparous fish. It catches small fish to feed itself by touching them, causing them to grow numb and be frozen in place”). Oppian’s technique of amplification is discussed in Rebuffat 2001, 67–86.

For the Sting-ray and the Swordfish God has put in their bodies most powerful gifts, equipping each with a weapon of exceeding might. Above the jaw of the Swordfish he has set a natural sword, upright and sharp, no sabre of iron but a mighty sword with the strength of adamant. When he puts his weight behind his terrible spear not even the hardest rock may endure the wound: so fierce and fiery is the onset.

In this case Oppian avoids an obvious solution: instead of linking ξιφίας to ξίφος, as does Aristotle fr. 223 (quoted at Athen. 314e),<sup>30</sup> he explains it through two different epic synonyms, φάσγανον and ἄορ, which frame verse 465 and the comparison of the sword to the *adamas*. In this case too we are faced with a cross-reference: at 1.182 Oppian had spoken of ξιφίαι ... φερώνυμοι. This adjective φερώνυμοι (well-named) is explained in the second book without any explicit link to the previous appearance of the ξιφίας in the *Halieutica*. The reader should have already understood that fish-names (or at least a great number of them) are semantically motivated and should thus be capable of linking the description in Book 2 with the notion that the ξιφίας bears its name rightly. Oppian's work presupposes thus an active reader who is acquainted with the scientific material, reads carefully and can detect cross-references within the work, as we have already seen. Furthermore, the comparison with the aforementioned Aristotelian fragment makes clear that the poet is not primarily interested in the scientific aspect. Aristotle describes both sides of the jaws (ρύγχος) of the sword-fish and emphasizes the length of the 'sword' as well as the fact that the fish lacks teeth. On the other hand, the didactic poet places special focus on the strength of the sword, which he compares to iron and *adamas*, and implies that even a rock would not be able to withstand the attack of a swordfish and that the weapon of the swordfish, in contrast to that of the ray, is not preserved after the death of the fish. The poet avails himself of the opportunity to present an *apiston* (an incredible story), i.e. the fact that the weapon of the ray does not lose its effect after the creature's death.<sup>31</sup>

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30 Τοῦτον Ἀριστοτέλης φησὶν ἔχειν τοῦ ρύγχους τὸ μὲν ὑποκάτω μικρόν, το δὲ καθύπερθεν ὁστώδες μέγα, ἴσον τῷ ὅλῳ αὐτοῦ μεγέθει· τοῦτο δὲ καλεῖσθαι ξίφος· ὀδόντας δ' οὐκ ἔχειν τὸν ἰχθύν ("Aristotle reports that the lower portion of its jaw is small; that the upper portion is large and bonelike, and equal in length to the rest of the creature as a whole—this part is referred to as the sword—and that the fish lacks teeth").

31 On *mirabilia* in Oppian see Silva Sánchez 2016, 258–259 and Rebuffat 2001, 135–144.

## 6 Fish-names reflecting habits and behaviour

At this point I would like to follow up on a point made earlier in the context of the *πομπίλος*: the name of a fish can reflect also its habits or behaviour. The *ήμεροκοίτης* is a case in point. Its name is explained through synonyms at 2.199–205:

φράζο δ' ἀφραδίῃ προφερέστατον ἡμεροκοίτην  
 ἰχθύν, ὃν παρὰ πάντας ἀεργότατον τέκεν ἄλμη. 200  
 τοῦ δ' ἦτοι κεφαλῆς μὲν ἄνω τέτραπται ὕπερθεν  
 ὄμματα, καὶ στόμα λάβρον ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσι μέσοισιν·  
 αἰεὶ δ' ἐν ψαμάθοισι πανημέριος τετάνυσται  
 εὐδων, νυκτὶ δὲ μῶνον ἀνέγρεται ἢ δ' ἀλάληται·  
 τοῦνεκα κέκληται καὶ νυκτερίς.<sup>32</sup>

Mark now a fish who exceeds all in stupidity, the Day-sleeper, lazy beyond all the sea breeds. The eyes in his head are turned upward and the ravenous mouth between his eyes. Always he lies all day stretched in the sands asleep and only at night does he awake and wander abroad; wherefore he is also called the Bat.

The fish obtained its name from the fact that it sleeps in the sand all day long (*πανημέριος*; *εὐδων* that glosses *κοίτος*), and the poet adds that it is awake and roams about only at night. This last point gives Oppian the opportunity to mention its alternative name, the bat (*νυκτερίς*). We thus have a case of double naming, a phenomenon familiar since the archaic hexameter tradition. Both names of *ήμεροκοίτης* are equally semantically well-motivated. Interestingly, while lines 200–201 hint at the other name by which this fish is sometimes referred to (*οὐρανοσκόπος*; cf. Hsch. α 3603), this name is never mentioned explicitly. Besides, the name *ήμεροκοίτης* is an intertextual kenning that reminds us of the first didactic poet, Hesiod, who introduced, as far as we can tell, this word. This term appears in *Op.* 604–605:

καὶ κύνα καρχαρόδοντα κομεῖν, μὴ φείδεο σίτου,  
 μὴ ποτέ σ' ἡμερόκοιτος ἀνὴρ ἀπὸ χρήμαθ' ἔληται.

and tend a sharp-toothed dog, don't be sparing with its fodder, lest ever a day-sleeping man deprive you of your possessions.

<sup>32</sup> On the identification of this fish, see Mair 1928, 300–301. The name *καλλιώνυμος* is not mentioned in Oppian.

The term ἡμερόκοιτος or ἡμεροκοίτης is used only by these two poets,<sup>33</sup> and in his description of the ἡμερόκοιτος Oppian insists on its laziness (ἀεργότατον 200; cf. ἀεργήν in 219), an idea that chimes well with Hesiod's *Works and Days* and its repeated advice to Perses to work hard and shun ἀεργίη. Besides, Oppian shows at 2.408–418 that he is familiar with the relevant Hesiodic passage.<sup>34</sup> In that simile he employs the term ἡμερόκοιτος for the thief, just as Hesiod before him, when he illustrates how the octopus attacks and kills a crab. At the same time, he evokes another concept important to Hesiod's *Works and Days*, namely δίκη (409):

ὥς δέ τις ἡμερόκοιτος ἀνὴρ ληϊστορὶ τέχνη  
 ὀρμαίνων ἀΐδηλα, δίκης σέβας οὔποτ' ἀέξων,  
 ἐσπέριος στεινῆσι καταπτήξας ἐν ἀγυαῖς, 410  
 ἄνδρα παραστείχοντα μετ' εἰλαπίνην ἐλόχησε·  
 καὶ ῥ' ὁ μὲν οἰνοβαρὴς ἔρπει πάρος, ὕγρὸν αἰδων,  
 οὐ μάλα νηφάλιον κλάζων μέλος· αὐτὰρ ὁ λάθρη  
 ἐξόπιθε προὔτυψε καὶ αὐχένα χερσὶ δαφοναῖς  
 εἶλεν ἐπιβρίσας, κλινέν τέ μιν ἄγριον ὕπνον 415  
 οὐ τηλοῦ θανάτοιο καὶ εἴματα πάντ' ἐναρίζας  
 ὥχετο, δυσκερδὴ τε φέρων καὶ ἀνέστιον ἄγρην·  
 τοιάδε καὶ πινυτοῖσι νοήματα πουλυπόδεσιν.

Even as a day-sleeping man, with predatory craft devising dark counsels, never honouring the majesty of justice, skulks at evening in the narrow streets and lies in wait for one passing by after a banquet; the banqueter, heavy with wine, goes forward, singing drunkenly, bawling no very sober melody; and the other darts forth stealthily behind and seizes his neck with murderous hands and overpowers him and lays him low in a cruel sleep not far from death and despoils him of all his raiment and goes his way with his booty, ill-gotten and unlawful; even such are the devices of the cunning Poulpes.

Likewise, the fish called ἐξώκοιτος bears a name that illustrates its habits, and this too has a double name, as we find out at 1.155–167:

ἔστι δέ τις πέτρησιν ἀλικλύστοισι μεμηλώς, 155  
 ξανθὸς ἰδεῖν, κεστρεῦσι φυὴν ἐναλίγκιος ἰχθύς,  
 τὸν μερόπων ἕτεροι μὲν ἐπικλείουσιν ἄδωνιν,  
 ἄλλοι δ' ἐξώκοιτον ἐφήμισαν, οὐνεκα κοίτας  
 ἐκτὸς ἀλὸς τίθεται, μῦθος δ' ἐπὶ χέρσον ἀμείβει,  
 ὅσσοι γε βράγχη, στόματος πτύχας, ἀμφὶς ἔχουσιν. 160  
 εὔτε γὰρ εὐνήσῃ χαροπῆς ἀλὸς ἔργα γαλήνῃ,

33 It next appears in commentators and lexicographers.

34 See Bartley 2003, 219–221.

αὐτὰρ ὃ γ' ἔσσυμένοισι συνορμηθεὶς ῥοθίοισι,  
 πέτραις ἀμφιταθεὶς ἀμπαύεται εὐδιον ὕπνον.  
 ὀρνίθων δ' ἁλίων τρομέει γένος, οἳ οἱ ἔασι  
 δυσμενέες· τῶν ἦν τιν' ἔσαθρήσῃ πελάσαντα, 165  
 πάλλεται ὀρχηστῇρι πανείκελος, ὄφρα ἔ πόντου  
 προπροκυλινδόμενον σπιλάδων ἄπο χεῦμα σαώσῃ.

A fish exists which haunts the sea-washed rocks, yellow of aspect and in like build unto the Grey Mullet; some men call him Adonis; others name him the Sleeper-out, because he takes his sleep outside the sea and comes to the land, alone of all those that have gills, those folds of the mouth, on either side. For when calm hushes the works of the glancing sea, he hastes with the hasting tide and, stretched upon the rocks, takes his rest in the fine weather. But he fears the race of sea-birds which are hostile to him; if he sees any of them approach, he hops like a dancer until, as he rolls on and on, the sea-wave receive him safe from the rocks.

The name ἐξώκοιτος is etymologised explicitly (cf. οὐνεκα, κοίτας, ἐκτός), while its other name, Adonis, is left unexplained. Does this mean that the name Adonis is less appropriate or mistaken? Be that as it may, this description corresponds to what we find in the scholarly literature on the subject. Clearchus fr. 101 (< Athen. 332c) inform us about this fish, and Oppian's description shows several similarities with the text of Clearchus, which have been highlighted by means of italics:<sup>35</sup>

οὐκ ἔλαθεν δέ με οὐδὲ Κλέαρχος ὁ ἀπὸ τοῦ Περιπάτου ὅς' εἶρκε καὶ περὶ τοῦ ἐξώκοίτου καλουμένου ἰχθύος ἐν τῷ ἐπιγραφομένῳ περὶ τῶν ἐνύδρων. εἶρκε γάρ — κρατεῖν δ' οἶμαι καὶ τῆς λέξεως οὕτως ἐχούσης: ὁ ἐξώκοιτος ἰχθύς, ὃν ἐνιοὶ καλοῦσιν ἄδωνιν, τοῦτομα μὲν εἴληπε διὰ τὸ πολλάκις τὰς ἀναπαύσεις ἔξω τοῦ ὕγρου ποιεῖσθαι. ἐστὶ δὲ ὑπόπυρρος καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν βραγχίων ἐκατέρωθεν τοῦ σώματος μέχρι τῆς κέρκου μίαν ἔχει διηνεκὴ λευκὴν ῥάβδον. ἐστὶ δὲ στρογγύλος, ἀλλ' οὐ πλατὺς ὢν κατὰ τὸ μέγεθος ἴσος ἐστὶ τοῖς παραιγιαλίταις κεστρινίσκοις. οὗτοι δ' εἰσὶν ὀκταδάκτυλοι μάλιστα τὸ μήκος. τὸ δὲ σύνολον ὁμοιότητός ἐστι τῷ καλουμένῳ τράγῳ ἰχθυδίῳ πλην τοῦ ὑπὸ τὸν στόμαχον μέλανος, ὃ καλοῦσι τοῦ τράγου πώγωνα. ἐστὶ δ' ὁ ἐξώκοιτος τῶν πετράων καὶ βιοτενεὶ περὶ τοὺς πετρώδεις τόπους καὶ ὅταν ᾗ γαλήνη, συνεξορούσας τῷ κύματι κεῖται ἐπὶ τῶν πετρίδιων πολὺν χρόνον ἀναπαυόμενος ἐν τῷ ξηρῷ καὶ μεταστρέφει μὲν ἑαυτὸν πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον. ὅταν δ' ἱκανῶς αὐτῷ τὰ πρὸς τὴν ἀνάπαυσιν ἔχη, προσκυλινδεῖται τῷ ὑγρῷ, μέχρι οὗ ἂν πάλιν ὑπολάβῃ αὐτὸν τὸ κύμα κατενέγκῃ μετὰ τῆς ἀναρροίας εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν. ὅταν δ' ἐγρηγορῶς ἐν τῷ ξηρῷ τύχῃ, φυλάττεται τῶν ὀρνίθων τοὺς παρευδιστάς καλουμένους, ὧν ἐστὶ κηρύλος, τρόχιλος καὶ ὁ τῇ κρεκί προ-

35 Thphr., fr. 171 (περὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ ξηρῷ διαμενόντων) transmits the etymology of the name ἐξώκοιτος but focuses on the respiratory system of the fish instead of the sea-birds which threaten the ἐξώκοιτος and the way in which it rolls back into the sea.

σεμφερής ἐλώριος· οὔτοι γὰρ ἐν ταῖς εὐδαίαις παρὰ τὸ ξηρὸν νεμόμενοι πολλάκις αὐτῷ περιπίπτουσιν, οὓς ὅταν προΐδῃται φεύγει πηδῶν καὶ ἀσπαίρων, ἕως ἂν εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ ἀποκυβίστήσῃ.<sup>36</sup>

The etymological explication of fish-names that relate to typical activities contribute to the extreme anthropomorphisation of the fish. In this way the fish appear to have a sense of will and purpose, with habits and tasks that they fulfil. For instance, the *καρκίνος* is also called *πιννοφύλαξ*, since he guards the fish called *πίννη* (2.187–192):

ὄστρακον αὖ βυθίας μὲν ἔχει πλάκας, ἐν δέ οἱ ἰχθὺς  
πίννη ναιετάει κεκλημένος· ἢ μὲν ἄναλκις  
οὔτε τι μῆτισασθαι ἐπίσταται οὔτε τι ῥέξαι,  
ἀλλ' ἄρα οἱ ξυνόν τε δόμον ξυνήν τε καλύπτειν  
καρκίνος ἐνναίει, φέρβει δέ μιν ἡδὲ φυλάσσει·  
τῷ καὶ πιννοφύλαξ κικλήσκεται. 190

A shell again keeps the plains of the deep, wherein dwells a fish called Pinna. The Pinna herself is weak and can of herself devise nothing nor do anything, but in one house and one shelter with her dwells a Crab which feeds and guards her; wherefore it is called the Pinna-guard.

This is the case also with the *ἐχενήϊς* whose name at the same time points to a paradox, an *apiston*, which is made credible through this explanation.<sup>37</sup> Thus, we read in 1.212–243:

<sup>36</sup> “I am also familiar with what Clearchus the Peripatetic says in his work entitled *On Aquatic Creatures* on the subject of the so-called *exokoitos* fish. He says—I believe that I can quote the passage, which runs as follows: The *exokoitos* fish, which some authorities refer to as an *adonis*, got its name from the fact that it often rests outside of (*exo*) the water. It is reddish and has a single white stripe that runs the length of its body on both sides from its gills to its tail. It is globular, but not wide across, and is the same size as the small gray mullets caught along the shore, which are six inches (‘eight fingers’) long at most. In general it most closely resembles the so-called *tragos* fish, except for the dark part beneath its mouth, which is referred to as a ‘goat’s-beard’. The *exokoitos* is a rock-fish and lives in rocky areas; whenever the sea is calm, it rides a wave out of it and lies on the pebbles for a long time, resting on the beach, and turns itself to face the sun. After it has rested enough, it rolls back toward the water until the waves pick it up again and carry it back out to the sea as they leave the shore. As it lies awake on the beach, it keeps an eye out for the so-called fair-weather birds, which include the *kerulos*, the Egyptian plover, and the type of heron that resembles a *krex*. Because when the weather is good, these birds feed along the coast and often attack the *exokoitos*; when it spies them, it tries to get away by flopping and thrashing about, until it finally jumps into the water.”

<sup>37</sup> See Thomspon 1947, 68–70, for this fish whose Latin name is *remora* ‘delay’; cf. Plut. 641b: βραδύτητα καὶ διατριβήν; and Rebuffat 2001, 139–140. Humar 2015 analyses the ancient sources

καὶ μὲν δὴ πελάγεσσιν ὁμῶς ἐχενήϊς ἐταίρη·  
 ἢ δ' ἦτοι ταναῖ μὲν ἰδεῖν, μήκος δ' ἰσόπηχυς,  
 χροιοῖ δ' αἰθαλόεσσα, φυὴ δέ οἱ ἐγχελύεσσιν  
 εἶδεται, ὅξυ δέ οἱ κεφαλῆς στόμα νέρθε νένευκε 215  
 καμπύλον, ἀγκίστρον περιηγέος εἵκελον αἰχμῇ.  
 θαῦμα δ' ὀλισθηρῆς ἐχενήϊδος ἐφράσαντο  
 ναυτίλοι· οὐ μὲν δὴ τις ἐνὶ φρεσὶ πιστώσαιτο  
 εἰσαῖων· αἰεὶ γὰρ ἀπειρήτων νόος ἀνδρῶν  
 δύσμαχος, οὐδ' ἐθέλουσι καὶ ἀτρεκέεσσι πιθέσθαι· 220  
 νῆα τιτανομένην ἀνέμου ζαχρηέος ὀρμῇ,  
 λαίφεσι πεπταμένοισιν ἀλὸς διὰ μέτρα θέουσας,  
 ἰχθὺς ἀμφιχανῶν ὀλίγον στόμα νέρθεν ἐρύκει,  
 πᾶσαν ὑποτρόπιος βεβημένος· οὐδ' ἔτι τέμνει  
 κύμα καὶ ἱεμένη, κατὰ δ' ἔμπεδον ἐστήρικται, 225  
 ἥ ῥ' ἐν ἀκλύστοισιν ἐεργομένη λιμένεσσι.  
 καὶ τῆς μὲν λίνα πάντα περὶ προτόνοισι μέμυκε,  
 ῥοχθεῦσιν δὲ κάλως, ἐπημύει δὲ κεραίῃ,  
 ῥιπτὴ ἐπειγομένη, πρύμνῃ δ' ἔπι πάντα χαλινὰ  
 ἰθυστῆρ ἀνίσχιν, ἐπισπέρχων ὁδὸν ἄλμης· 230  
 ἢ δ' οὐτ' οἰήκων ἐμπάζεται οὐτ' ἀνέμοισι  
 πείθεται, οὐ ῥοθίοισιν ἐλαύνεται, ἀλλὰ παγεῖσα  
 μίμνει τ' οὐκ ἐθέλουσα καὶ ἐσσυμένη πεπέδηται,  
 ἰχθύος οὐτιδανοῖο κατὰ στόμα ριζωθεῖσα·  
 ναῦται δὲ τρομέουσιν, αἰδέελα δεσμὰ θαλάσσης 235  
 δερκόμενοι καὶ θάμβος ἴσον λεύσσοντες ὄνειρῳ.  
 ὥς δ' ὅτ' ἐνὶ ξυλόχοισιν ἀνὴρ λαιψηρὰ θέουσας  
 θηρητῆρ ἔλαφον δεδοκημένος ἄκρον οἰστῶ  
 κῶλον ὑπὸ πτερόεντι βαλὼν ἐπέδησεν ἐρωῆς·  
 ἢ δὲ καὶ ἐσσυμένη περ ἀναγκαίης ὁδύνησιν 240  
 ἀμφιπαγεῖσ' ἀέκουσα μένει θρασὺν ἀγρευτῆρα·  
 τοίην νηὶ πέδην περιβάλλεται αἰόλος ἰχθὺς  
 ἀντιάσας· τοίων δὲ φερωνυμὴν λάχεν ἔργων.

Companion of the open seas likewise is the Echeneïs. It is slender of aspect, in length a cubit, its colour dusky, its nature that of an eel; under its head its mouth slopes sharp and crooked, like the barb of a crooked hook. A marvelous thing have mariners remarked of the slippery Echeneïs, hearing which a man would refuse to believe it in his heart; for always the mind of inexperienced men is hard to persuade, and they will not believe even the truth. When a ship is straining under stress of a strong wind, running with spread sails over the spaces of the sea, the fish gapes its tiny mouth and stays all the ship underneath, constraining it below the keel; and it cleaves the waves no more for all its haste but is firmly stayed, even as if it were shut up in a tideless harbour. All its canvas groans upon the forests, the

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on this fish and concludes that in antiquity the sea lamprey was confused with the *Echeneis remora*.



ropes creak, the yardarm bends under the stress of the breeze, and on the stern the steersman gives every rein to the ship, urging her to her briny path. But she neither heeds the helm nor obeys the winds nor is driven by the waves, but, fixed fast, remains against her will and is fettered for all her haste, rooted on the mouth of a feeble fish. And the sailors tremble to see the mysterious bonds of the sea, beholding a marvel like unto a dream. As when in the woods a hunter lies in wait for a swift-running Deer and smites her with winged arrow on the leg and stays her in her course; and she for all her haste, transfixed with compelling pain, unwillingly awaits the bold hunter; such a fetter does the spotted fish cast about the ship which it encounters, and from such deeds it gets its name.

The etymologically correct name renders an incredible story credible: both constituent parts of the name are mentioned in the preceding narrative (ναῦς and ἐρύκειν that glosses ἔχειν), and if one is not ἀπείρητος he will understand that the name derived from the fish's effect on ships. What is more, Oppian's explanation of the name ἔχενηϊς and of the effects of this fish allude to another important aspect of it, its use in love and courtroom magic for which we have evidence from Aristotle (*HA* 505b18–20)<sup>38</sup> and Pliny the Elder (*HN* 9.79) but which Oppian does not address explicitly. More specifically, the terms οὐκ ἐθέλουσα ... πεπέδεται 232, δεσμά 236, πέδην 242 (cf. ἀέκουσαν 241, παγεῖσα 232), all of which are highlighted in the passage quoted above, belong to the vocabulary of κατάδεσμοι, as Lindsay Watson has illustrated with copious parallels.<sup>39</sup> Even though this aspect of the fish's function is left unmentioned in Oppian's presentation, the use of this vocabulary should alert the knowledgeable reader to the fish's use in magic. An even greater *apiston*, the fish's ability to delay the unfolding of a lawsuit or to force someone to remain forever under the spell of his or her lover, remains unsaid even though that, too, is implicit in the fish's name (ἔχενηϊς, *remora*).

## 7 Fish-names reflecting the circumstances of their generation

A name can also point to the circumstances of a fish's generation. This is the case with the name of the ἀφύη (Fry) at *Hal.* 1.767–783:

<sup>38</sup> "Ἔστι δ' ἰχθύδιόν τι τῶν πετραίων, ὃ καλοῦσι τινες ἐχενηῖδα, καὶ χρώνται τινες αὐτῷ πρὸς δίκας καὶ φίλτρα ("there is a small rock-fish which some call *echeneis* and some use it in trials and magical charms").

<sup>39</sup> See Watson 2010.

ὥς δὲ καὶ ἠπεδανῆς ἀφύης ὀλιγηπελὲς ἔθνος  
 οὐτινος ἐκγεγάασιν ἀφ' αἵματος οὐδὲ τοκήων·  
 εὔτε γὰρ ἐκ νεφέων Ζηνὸς νόος ὄμβρον ἀφύξῃ  
 λάβρον ὑπὲρ πόντοιο καὶ ἄσχετον, αὐτίκα πᾶσα 770  
 μιγομένη διόισι ὁμοῦ πυρσοῖσι θάλασσα  
 σίζει τ' ἀφριά τε καὶ ἴσταται οἰδαίνουσα,  
 αἱ δ' ἐν ἀτεκμάρτοισι καὶ ἀσκέπτοισι γάμοισιν  
 ἀθρόαι ἐκ τ' ἐγένοντο καὶ ἔτραφον ἐκ τ' ἐφάνησαν  
 μυρίαί, ἀβληχραί, πολὺν γένος· ἐκ δὲ γενέθλης 775  
 οὕνομ' ἐπικλήδην ἀφρίτιδες αὐδῶνται.  
 ἄλλαι δ' ἰλυόεντος ὑπὲκ φλοίσβοιο φύονται·  
 εὔτε γὰρ ἐν δίνῃσι παλιρροίης τε θαλάσσης  
 βράσσηται πᾶμφυρτος ἀφυσγετὸς ἐξ ἀνέμοιο  
 σπερχομένου, τότε πᾶσα συνίσταται εἰς ἓν ἰοῦσα 780  
 ἰλὺς εὐρώεσσα, γαληναίης δὲ ταθείσης  
 ἐξαυτῆς ψάμαθός τε καὶ ἄσπετα φύρματα πόντου  
 πύθεται, ἐκ δὲ φύονται ἀθέσφατοι, εἵκελοι εὐλαῖς.

So also the weak race of the feeble Fry are born of no blood and of no parents. For when from the clouds the wisdom of Zeus draws rain, fierce and incontinent, upon the deep, straightway all the sea, confounded by eddying winds, hisses and foams, and swells up by what manner of mating is beyond ken or guess, the Fry in shoals are born and bred and come to light, numberless and feeble, a hoary brood; and from the manner of their birth they are nicknamed the Daughters of the Foam. And others of the Fry spring from the alluvial slime; for when in the eddies and tides of the sea a medley mass of scum is washed up by the driving wind, then all the slimy silt comes together and when calm is spread abroad, straightway the sand and the infinite refuse of the sea ferment and therefrom spring the Fry innumerable like worms.

This fish is known by two names, both of which are etymologically explicated and are related to the way in which this fish is generated. The presentation of these etymologically motivated names is supported through a network of paronomasiae. The name ἀφύη is derived from φύεσθαι (1.783) and the privative ἀ-<sup>40</sup> which is present in ἀτεκμάρτοισι, ἀσκέπτοισι (773) and ἀθέσφατοι (783) and possibly ἀκιδνότερον (784). What distinguishes this fish is that it is not conceived through the regular reproductive procedure (1.768 οὐτινος ἐκγεγάασιν ἀφ' αἵματος οὐδὲ τοκήων). The paronomastic wordplay in the following verse (εὔτε ... ἀφύξῃ) explains how these fish are actually born: the *noos* of Zeus draws (ἀφύξῃ) water

40 Cf. the Italian fish-name *nonnati* = *unguannotti*, *pesci natti quest'anno* (Paganini 1846, s.v. *gianchetti*).

from the clouds,<sup>41</sup> and through the storm the entire sea is stirred and thus it foams (ἀφρία). Through these last words the second name of the ἀφύη is explained (1.772, 775–776, ἀφριά ἀφρίτιδες). Finally, the last name is linked also to ἀφουσγετός (779), in which the ἀφύη is born.

Here, too, we may detect similarities to what we find in scientific sources. The way in which the discussion of the ἀφύη is introduced might point to a derivation from ἀφύης, which we find in Athen. 367a (ἀφυνὲς γὰρ καὶ μικρόν, ὥσπερ καὶ ἡ ἀφύη, sc. τὸ νᾶπυ; the fish is called ἀβληχρή by Oppian). Another etymology related to φύειν is given by Athen. at 324d (ἀφύαι δὲ ὡς ἂν ἀφυνεῖς οὖσαι, τουτέστιν δυσφυνεῖς ('germinating tardily' LSJ)), in a section replete with etymologies of fish-names. Athen. 325b offers yet another etymology, culled from certain authorities which unfortunately he does not identify, but which, interestingly, establishes a connection with Aphrodite:

καὶ τὸν θαλάττιον γόνον, ὃν ἡμεῖς μὲν ἀφύην, ἄλλοι δὲ ἀφρίτιν ὀνομάζουσιν, οἱ δὲ ἀφρόν. προσφιλέστατον εἶναι καὶ τοῦτον Ἀφροδίτῃ διὰ τὸ καὶ αὐτὴν ἐξ ἀφροῦ γεννηθῆναι.

As for the sea-*gonos* (spawn), which we call small-fry (*aphue*), some authorities refer to it as *aphritis*, while others call it *aphros*; this is Aphrodite's favorite fish, because she herself was born from foam (*aphros*).

Indeed, the goddess and her favourite fish have some things in common. Both names begin with the same sounds. Both are born in a miraculous way: Aphrodite arises from the foam formed around the castrated member of Ouranos cast by Cronus into the sea, while the ἀφύη or ἀφρίτις is born out of the foam formed in the sea when Zeus agitates it, and both are born of spontaneous conception and growth. The story of the ἀφύη may appear a paradox, but it is 'confirmed' through the evocation of the miraculous birth of Aphrodite, which is, incidentally, one of the first stories in Hesiod's *Theogony* to receive an explicit etymology as a way of confirming its correctness, a clever and necessary strategy given both the strangeness of Aphrodite's birth and the existence of different accounts concerning her parentage (*Il.* 4 and *h.Aphr*). At 284f–285a Athenaeus transmits a fragment of Aristotle (fr. 309) in which reference is made to both the ἀφρός but also the slime (ἰλύς) in which a type of ἀφύη is born. It is striking in this context that both the philosopher and the poet distinguish between categories of ἀφύη on the basis of the place where they are born. Aristotle transmits more types of this fish,

<sup>41</sup> An etymology from ἀφ' (ἀπό) and ὕειν may be operative here as well; Thompson 1947, 21–23; on p. 22 he suggests that the term ἀφύη is the Greek interpretation of an Egyptian word for fish (cf. Crum, s.v. hfour (ϣϣοϣ) = the small fish).

whereas the poet is content to list only two, as Oppian is not primarily interested in the scientific aspect of his subject.<sup>42</sup>

While the name of ἀφύη relates to the circumstances of its birth, the τρίγλη acquires its name from the fact that she gives birth thrice within a year.<sup>43</sup> Accordingly, its name is derived from the numeral τρίς. This is confirmed by Oppian at 1.590:

καὶ τοὶ μὲν λυκάβαντι μίαν μογέουσι γενέθλην  
οἱ πλεῖστοι, λάβραξ δὲ δις ἄχθεται εἰλειθυίαις·  
τρίγλαι δὲ τριγόνουσιν ἐπώνυμοί εἰσι γονῆσι·  
σκορπίος αὖ τετόρεσσι φέρει βέλος ὠδίνεσσι·  
πέντε δὲ κυπρίνοισι γοναὶ μούνοισιν ἕασιν·  
οἴου δ' οὐποτέ φασι γένος φράσασθαι ὀνίσκου,  
ἀλλ' ἔτι τοῦτ' αἰδῆλον ἐν ἀνθρώποισι τέτυκται.

590

And some—the greatest part—are in travail of a single brood a year, but the Basse is twice burdened by the pangs of birth; the Red Mullet gets its name *Trigla* from its triple brood; the Scorpion again endures the pang of four labours; the Carps alone bear five times; and the Oniscus is the only fish, they say, whose breeding no one has ever explained, but which is still a mystery among men.

Aristotle *HA* 534a5 also attests to this particularity of the *trigla* (ἡ δὲ τρίγλη μόνη τρίς. τεκμαίρονται δ' ἐκ τοῦ γόνου. τρίς γὰρ φαίνεται ὁ γόνος περὶ τινὰς τόπους), and in fact Oppian's treatment betrays similarities with Aristotle's discussion. The poet begins with the fishes that give birth once a year and then continues to the λάβραξ (sea-bass) that gives birth twice. Thereafter follows the τρίγλη and then the σκορπίος. Granted that Oppian may have based his exposition here on a source that drew on Aristotle, there are nevertheless also important differences between the two: Aristotle lists several kinds of fishes that give birth once a year while Oppian simply speaks of πλεῖστοι. The σκορπίος gives birth in Aristotle twice, whereas in Oppian four times in a year. And while Oppian's catalogue ends with the κυπρίνος and the ὀνίσκος (whose γόνος remains unknown), Aristotle continues by listing four more fish-types.

<sup>42</sup> As Silva Sánchez (2016, 260) points out, the poet is more interested in the 'customs', 'society' and 'character' of the fish than in purely scientific/biological issues. In this respect, cf. also Rebuffat 2001, 33: "In ogni caso dobbiamo sempre tenere presente che Oppiano era un artista, non un naturalista: ciò che a lui interessava era non la novità o la scientificità del contenuto, ma la qualità della veste artistica."

<sup>43</sup> Thompson 1947, 264–268. Strömberg (1943, 72) derives it from τρίζειν (cf. Arist., *HA* 535b24–25: τῶν σελαχῶν ἔνια δοκεῖ τρίζειν), although he does not cite any ancient reference that links the fish-name with this verb. See also below, fn. 57.

## 8 The knowledgeable reader

As we have already seen on several occasions, Oppian's explanations of fish-names sometimes presuppose that the reader is already familiar with the material that he is expounding and can supply the missing details. Instead of supplying to his reader raw knowledge, Oppian appears to direct his poem to an audience that has already achieved a certain level of familiarity with the material and the genre in which he is writing so that they are able to follow explanations that at times are riddled with gaps. A case in point can be found in 1.125–126:

πέτραι δ' ἀμφίαλοι πολυειδέες· αἱ μὲν ἔασι  
 φύκεσι μυδαλαί, περὶ δὲ μνία πολλὰ πέφυκε·  
 τὰς ἧτοι πέρκαι καὶ ἰουλίδες ἀμφὶ τε χάννοι  
 φέρβονται σάλπαι τε καὶ φυκίδες οὗς θ' ἀλιῆες  
 ἀνδρὸς ἐπωνυμίην θηλύφρονος ἠὺδάξαντο.

125

125 ᾗς θ' codd.

The sea-girt rocks are of many sorts. Some are wet and covered with seaweed and about them grows abundant moss. About these feed the Perch and the Rainbow-wrasse and the Channus and withal the spangled Saupe and the slender Thrush-wrasse and the Phycis and those which fishermen have nicknamed from the name of an effeminate man.

These verses belong to a section which treats fishes that live in algae. The short catalogue ends with the fish which fishermen have called by the name of an effeminate man. This is the fish known as κίναιδος (alias ἀλφρηστής), whose name the poet withholds from us and renders through a circumlocution, assuming that we can actively participate in this *Ergänzungsspiel* and supply the missing name ourselves.<sup>44</sup> We should not ignore, however, that this is a problematic passage from a textual critical point of view. While the most recent editor of the *Halieutica*, Fritz Fajen, prints here the manuscript reading ᾗς, which refers to the preceding φυκίδας, I would follow Mair in reading οὗς and thus construe the relative clause as introducing a new fish type, instead of using it as an attribute of the φυκίδες. The reason for this is that the φυκίδες are clearly distinguished from it in other

<sup>44</sup> Athen. 281d–e cites other sources for this fish. The ἀνθίας at 1.256–258 is a case of *Ergänzungsspiel* as well, albeit of a different kind: his byname αὐλωπός or εὐωπος derives from the “whirling dark brow placed like a circular crown above (their eyes)”, but the word on which this etymology is based (ὥψ) is not mentioned by the poet and must be supplied by the reader. An even more complicate case is the name of the myrrh-tree, implied but never mentioned or even hinted at through etymological wordplay in the digression of 3.402–408.

sources that mention them in the same breath as the ἀλφηστής.<sup>45</sup> Be that as it may, this passage presupposes that the reader knows the reason why this fish (whether identical with the φυκίδες or not) is also called κίναιδος. The answer to this question may be found in scientific sources, e.g. in Apollodorus' work on Sophron (quoted at Athen. 281d), who explains that these fishes always move in pairs and in such a way that one follows very closely behind the other, which gives rise to the perception among the observers that the fish resembles a man who is ἀκρατής (uncontrolled) and a κίναιδος.

## 9 Conclusions

What can we conclude from this material? The etymological explanations of fish-names in Oppian, most of which are 'correct' by the standards of linguistics as opposed to the frequently imaginative links established by ancient authors between words on the basis of vague similarities between some of the sounds they share, show that the names fulfil different purposes. Sometimes they show a prominent outward characteristic of the fish (e.g. κεντρίνης, ξιφίας). On other occasions they express a character trait of these fish: the λάβραξ (sea-bass) has acquired this name because of his λαβροσύνη (cf. Athen. 310f and Opp., *Hal.* 2.130: λάβρακα, σφετέρησιν ἐπικλέα λαβροσύνησιν), i.e. its gluttonous behaviour which leads to their death when they devour shrimps that are equipped with a sting located on their back. The same is true of the ἡμεροκοίτης whose description leads into a digression in which men are directly addressed and asked to reflect on the bad end that awaits the gluttonous.<sup>46</sup> Likewise, the tunny-fish (θύννος) owes its name to its dashing, impetuous movement (θύειν 1.181), which is an indication of its ἀφροσύνη that leads to its death, as we find out at 3.596–604.

The poet is also aware, however, that not all the connections that may arise in his reader's mind are correct. Thus, we are told that the fish called μάλθη did not receive its name because of its 'soft feebleness'.<sup>47</sup> In this way the poet makes

<sup>45</sup> See Athen. 319c who quotes from Numenius' Ἀλιευτικόν (577.1–3 *SH* ἄλλοτε δ' αὖ πέρκας, ὅτε δὲ στροφάδας παρὰ πέτρην | φυκίδας ἀλφηστήν τε καὶ ἐν χοιρίσιν ἐρυθρόν | σκορπίον) and 305b where he quotes from the first book of Diocles' Ὑγιεινά (οἱ δὲ πετραῖοι, φησὶν, καλούμενοι μαλακόσαρκοι, κόσσυφοι, κίχλαι, πέρκαι, κωβιοί, φυκίδες, ἀλφηστικός).

<sup>46</sup> See Bartley 2003, 152–155.

<sup>47</sup> 1.371: οὐ μαλακῆσιν ἐπώνυμος ἀδρανίησιν. There is a textual issue here, with some manuscripts transmitting θ' ἢ instead of τ' οὐ (or δ' οὐ). Fajen and Mair print τ' οὐ, rightly so in view of

clear to his audience that any association to μαλθακός (feeble) or perhaps μάλθη, a mixture of wax and pitch spread on writing tablets or used to make figurines, is to be discarded.

Furthermore, a fish-name may allude to a longer narrative that explains the tasks and functions, the activities or preferences of the fish. In this context what Oppian has to say of the little ναυτίλος is extremely relevant (1.338–359):<sup>48</sup>

ἔστι δέ τις γλαφυρῷ κεκαλυμμένος ὀστράκῳ ἰχθύς,  
μορφὴν πουλυπόδεσσιν ἀλίγκιος, ὃν καλέουσι  
ναυτίλον, οἰκείησιν ἐπικλέα ναυτιλίησι· 340  
ναίει μὲν ψαμάθοις, ἀνὰ δ' ἔρχεται ἄκρον ἐς ὕδωρ  
πρηνῆς, ὅφρα κε μὴ μιν ἐνιπλήσειε θάλασσα·  
ἀλλ' ὅτ' ἀναπλώσῃ ῥοθίων ὑπερ ἀμφιτρίτης,  
αἶψα μεταστρεφθεὶς ναυτίλλεται, ὥστ' ἀκάτοιο 345  
ἴδρις ἀνὴρ· δοιοὺς μὲν ἄνω πόδας ὥστε κάλῳας  
ἀντανύει, μέσσοις δὲ διαρρέει ἥϊτε λαῖφος  
λεπτὸς ὕμνῳ, ἀνέμῳ τε τιταίνεται· αὐτὰρ ἔνερθε  
δοιοὶ ἄλός ψαύοντες, ἐοικότες οἰήκεσσι,  
πομποὶ τ' ἰθύνουσι δόμον καὶ νῆα καὶ ἰχθύν.  
ἀλλ' ὅτε ταρβήσῃ σχεδόνθεν κακόν, οὐκέτ' ἀήταις 350  
φεύγει ἐπιτρέψας, σὺν δ' ἔσπασε πάντα χαλινά,  
ἰστία τ' οἷγκάς τε, τὸ δ' ἀθρόον ἔνδον ἔδεκτο  
κῦμα βαρυνόμενός τε καθέλκεται ὕδατος ὀρμῇ.  
ὦ πόποι, ὅς πρῶτιστος ὄχους ἄλός εὖρατο νῆας,  
εἴτ' οὖν ἀθανάτων τις ἐπεφράσατ' εἴτε τις ἀνὴρ 355  
τολμήεις πρῶτιστος ἐπεύξατο κῦμα περῆσαι,  
ἧ που κείνον ἰδὼν πλόον ἰχθύος εἵκελον ἔργον  
δουροπαγὲς τόνῳσε, τὰ μὲν πνοιῇσι πετάσσας  
ἐκ προτόνων, τὰ δ' ὀπισθε χαλινωτήρια νηῶν.

There is one fish covered with a hollow shell, like in form to the Poulpe, which men call the Nautilus, so named because it sails of itself. It dwells in the sands and it rises to the surface of the water face downwards, so that the sea may not fill it. But when it swims above the waves of Amphitrite, straightway it turns over and sails like a man skilled in sailing a boat. Two feet it stretches aloft by way of rigging and between these runs like a sail a fine membrane which is stretched by the wind; but underneath two feet touching the water, like rudders, guide and direct house and ship and fish. But when it fears some evil hard at hand, no longer does it trust the winds in its flight, but gathers in all its tackle, sails and rudders, and receives the full flood within and is weighed down and sunk by the rush of water. Ah! whoever first invented ships, the chariots of the sea, whether it was some god that devised

the context in which this fish is mentioned, a catalogue of κήτεα. Cf. Ael., *NA* 9.49 who equates her with the πρῆστις: δυσανταγώνιστον δὲ ἄρα τὸ θηρίον τοῦτο καὶ ἄμαχον.

48 See Thompson 1947, 172–175, for other ancient authors treating this subject.

them or some daring mortal boasted to have crossed the wave, surely it was when he had seen the voyaging of a fish that he framed a like work in wood, spreading from the forestays those parts to catch the wind and those to control the ship.

The name ναυτίλος is essentially a micro-narrative that establishes an analogy between the fish's activity and navigation (ναυτίλλεσθαι). At the same time, Opiian accounts for the invention of navigation by claiming that the inventor observed this creature and imitated its activity.<sup>49</sup> The invention is explained as an act of 'reading' the natural world and translating the knowledge acquired from this 'reading' into an invention. The poet, however, inverts this act of 'reading': while the inventor of shipbuilding conceived of his invention by 'reading' nature, whoever conferred the name ναυτίλος upon this sea-creature compared the activity of the sea-creature to the act of sailing, thus reversing the process implied at the end of this vignette. One is reminded in this context of Aratus' anonymous first astronomer at *Phaen.* 367–385:

οἱ δ' ὀλίγῳ μέτρῳ, ὀλίγῃ δ' ἐγκείμενοι αἶγλη  
 μεσσόθι πηδαλίου καὶ Κήτεος εἰλίσσονται,  
 γλαυκοῦ πεπτηῶτες ὑπὸ πλευρῇσι Λαγωῦ  
 νώνυμοι· οὐ γὰρ τοίγε τετυγμένου εἰδώλοιο 370  
 βεβλέαται μελέεσσιν ἐοικότες, οἷά τε πολλὰ  
 ἐξεῖης στιχόωντα παρέρχεται αὐτὰ κέλευθα  
 ἀνομένων ἐτέων, τὰ τις ἀνδρῶν οὐκέτ' ἐόντων  
 ἐφράσας· ἥ δ' ἐνόησεν ἅπαντ' ὀνομαστὶ καλέσσαι  
 ἥλιθα μορφώσας· οὐ γὰρ κ' ἐδυνήσατο πάντων 375  
 οἰόθι κεκρμένων ὄνομ' εἰπέμεν οὐδὲ δαῖναι·  
 πολλοὶ γὰρ πάντη, πολέων δ' ἐπὶ ἴσα πέλονται  
 μέτρα τε καὶ χροίῃ, πάντες γε μὲν ἀμφιέλικοι.  
 Τῷ καὶ ὀμηγερέας οἱ εἰέσατο ποιήσασθαι  
 ἀστέρας, ὅφρ' ἐπιτάξῃ ἄλλω παρακείμενος ἄλλος 380  
 εἶδεα σημαίνουσιν. Ἄφαρ δ' ὀνομαστὰ γέγοντο  
 ἄστρον, καὶ οὐκέτι νῦν ὑπὸ θαύματι τέλλεται ἀστήρ,  
 ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν καθαροῖς ἐναρηρότερες εἰδώλοισιν  
 φαίνονται, τὰ δ' ἔνερθε διωκομένοιο Λαγωῦ  
 πάντα μάλ' ἡρόεντα καὶ οὐκ ὀνομαστὰ φέρονται. 385

Other stars, mean in size and feeble in splendour, wheel between the Rudder of Argo and Cetus, and beneath the grey Hare's sides they are set without a name. For they are not set like limbs of a fashioned figure, such as, many in number, fare in order along their constant paths, as the years are fulfilled—stars, which someone of a people who are no more noted and marked how to group into figures and to call all by a single name. For it had passed his

49 For such fictionalised accounts of inventions, see Roby 2016, 129–131.



skill to know each single star or name them one by one. Many are they on every hand and of many the magnitudes and colours are the same, while all go circling round. Wherefore he deemed fit to group them in companies, so that in order, set each by other, they might form figures. Hence the constellations got their names, and now no longer does any star rise a marvel from beneath the horizon. Now the other stars are grouped in clear figures and brightly shine, but those beneath the hunted Hare are all clad in mist and nameless in their course.<sup>50</sup>

This man of old gave the constellations their names by 'reading' the *semata* in the sky and extrapolating from what he saw figures that relate to either mythological characters or animals or other shapes. The initial act of reading was encoded by this first astronomer in language as an act of naming and was later re-traced by Aratus in his didactic poem. Zeus is responsible for the creation of the constellations, but the linguistic act of naming them was the work of a man who read and interpreted the shapes created by Zeus by grouping several stars together so as to form images. He thus 'made sense' of them by reducing them into familiar shapes which led to the establishment of the names of constellations that point both to the past, e.g., by representing famous mythological characters, and to the future, by functioning as *semata* for farmers and mariners. In Oppian's poem this situation is reversed, and the roles are further divided: nature has created the sea-creatures, men give them names that often function in the ways I have been describing, and men, furthermore, imitate nature through their inventions, as is the case of shipbuilding and the ναυτίλος. At the same time, the direction of the naming aetiology is inverted: the ναυτίλος did not acquire its name because it imitates the activity of a sailor; rather, it is the sailor who imitates the ναυτίλος.

Throughout narratives such as those which we have been exploring the poet uses motivated fish-names to argue points that command a certain degree of validity despite the fact that several of the fish-types mentioned in the poem do not belong to the sphere of the addressee's horizon of experience. As Oppian programmatically emphasizes at the end of his proem, the greatest part of the sea remains still unexplored, unknown, and αἰδηλον (*Hal.* 1.80–92).<sup>51</sup> The poet can thus make that which is absent appear present and allow us to comprehend it, if not visualise it (or at least assume that if a good number of the names are correct

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<sup>50</sup> The translation is by Mair 1921. On this passage see Erren 1967, 145–151, Levitan 1979, esp. 65 ("significance is born of pattern, and pattern of connection"), Pendergraft 1990; Kidd 1997, 318–319; Martin 1998, II, 302–307; Gee 2000, 84–87; Fakas 2001, 178–180, Hunter 2008, 162–163; Volk 2012, 220–221.

<sup>51</sup> See Kneebone 2017 for a discussion of the limits of the poet's knowledge in the context of imperial didactic poetry.

and authoritative, the remainder may also be). Through etymologically motivated names the poet can make an *apiston* appear credible, as it is reflected in the linguistic reality. These names are ‘symptoms’ or ‘clues’ that reveal something that is not readily present to, or indeed verifiable by, the poet and his audience and which thus perform the evidential function argued for by Carlo Ginzburg.<sup>52</sup>

In addition, the etymological explanations contribute to Oppian’s claim to authority. He shows through them that he not only knows the names of the fish he describes but that he also knows the reasons that led to the establishment of these names. In some cases it seems likely that Oppian is aware of the debates in the relevant scientific literature and indicates his position in these debates through the etymologies that he presents. Furthermore, the etymological explanations are not scattered randomly in the five books of the *Halieutica*; rather, they appear mainly in the first two books (esp. in the first),<sup>53</sup> and the reader is reminded of them through cross-references in subsequent books. This fact may explain a didactic strategy of the poet, just as in Hesiod’s *Theogony* in which the explicit etymologies of divine names appear in the first part of the poem until the catalogue of monsters and the section on the Oceanids and river-gods, where Hesiod declares that he is not able to recite all their 3,000 names. This is a passage with which imperial didactic poets engage directly when they declare the limits of their knowledge of the subject they purport to teach their audiences (as Kneebone 2017 shows). In Oppian’s *Halieutica* as well we are confronted with a similar distribution of etymologies which may point to a similar approach to teaching: the poet shows at the beginning of the *Halieutica* that fish-names are motivated and may reveal some important characteristics of these fish. The poet shows this on the basis of several examples in the first two books of the *Halieutica* and expects his reader to internalise this approach so that he himself can later seek the origins of fish-names. This addressee is thus urged to learn in an active manner so that he can later reach the level of the didactic poet. The addressee is ostensibly the emperor, who may not need these lessons given his success in fishing in the *vivarium* (cf. 1.56–72 where, it is said, fish are hooked on the line not against their will).<sup>54</sup> But just as with Aratus’ *Phaenomena* we cannot help suspecting that a wider audience is intended here, consisting of readers both steeped in the didactic tradition and familiar with the literature on ichthyology so that they

<sup>52</sup> See Ginzburg 1992. I owe this reference to Federico Santangelo, to whom I express my thanks.

<sup>53</sup> This is not to say that etymologies do not occur beyond Book 2, as we saw above. There is, however, a marked distribution in the first two books.

<sup>54</sup> See above, fn. 5, on Oppian’s success with the emperor, and Kajava 1998–1999 on *piscinae* and *vivaria*.

can follow Oppian's treatment of the material. This reader will be able to supply what the poet leaves unsaid, as we saw in the discussion of the κεντρίνης, the κορακίνος, the ἡμεροκοίτης, the ἐχένηϊς, and the κίναιδος.

At the same time the fish-names and their etymological explanations contribute to the anthropomorphization of the fish. It is well-known that Oppian represents fishes as possessing emotions and purpose, a sense of will, desires and wishes, cunning (often called *metis* or *dolos*)<sup>55</sup> and passions just like humans. Their activities are often described in anthropomorphic terms, which allows the poet, as we have seen, to present what is unknown, i.e. the world of the fish that dwell in the depths of the sea which are still unexplored, through the use of imagery familiar to the audience.<sup>56</sup> The anthropomorphic representation of the fish is clearly pronounced in the numerous similes, while Oppian's fishes, creatures proverbially voiceless (ἔλλοπες),<sup>57</sup> deliver rhetorical speeches and *ethopoiai* (speeches in character) according to all the rules of the art. He uses the world of the fish in order to set up moral examples for men to follow or avoid (e.g., the consequences of lust or gluttony, or, positively, the way some kinds of fishes support and help each other in times of danger or the strong love that a parent feels for his children). In this way he establishes a kind of analogy between human and animal behaviour (endowed with speech and other human qualities) such as we encounter in animal fables.<sup>58</sup> At the same time, Oppian undoubtedly emerges as

55 On μήτις in Oppian, see Detienne/Vernant 1978 (ch. 2), esp. 28–35, 43–44. In investing the fish with human attributes Oppian at times departs from what we find in other sources. For instance, while the λάβραξ is the wisest fish (so Aristoph. fr. 612, quoted by Athen. 310f–311a), Oppian argues that the fish's λαβροσύνη has the better of it: only too late does the λάβραξ realise the errors of his ways when he dies after devouring a shrimp (καρίς), which kills him by means of the sting on its back with which it wounds him at the palate (cf. 2.140 ὁψὲ δὲ γινώσκει).

56 The attribution of human qualities or activities to the fish is certainly not Oppian's innovation; see Strömberg 1943, 91–97 for relevant examples.

57 Cf. Arist., *HA* 535b14ff. who attributes ψόφος rather than φωνή to fishes. Strömberg (1943, 65–66) lists ancient sources on such fish. Opp., *Hal* 1.134–135 claims that only the σκάρος among the voiceless fish produces a λαλαγή (ὅς δὲ μόνος ἐν ἰχθύσι πᾶσιν ἀναύδοις | φθέγγεται ἰκμαλέην λαλαγήν). But already Aristotle lists more types of fish in the aforementioned passage.

58 This issue is tied on the one hand with a question that exercised Stoics and Academics, viz. whether animals are endowed with reason (cf. Plutarch's *De sollertia animalium*), and on the other hand with the use of the world of animals to draw moral instruction for the benefit of men (cf., e.g., the address to the γοναί μερόπων at *Hal*. 2.217–224 where the poem's audience is warned against the dangers inherent in λαίμαργια: the end of the gluttonous ἡμεροκοίτης is a negative example that must be avoided; cf. on this Kneebone 2008, 44–47). It would lead too far afield if these two topics were treated in this article in the detail they deserve. See, e.g., Richmond 1973 for a reconstruction of the various philosophical sources that may have contributed to the *Halieutica*; Iglesias Zoido 2005 for the poem's ideological and philosophical context.

a poet who belongs firmly in the tradition of a kind of didactic poetry which reflects not only on the material taught but also on the authority of the knowledge conveyed and on the medium through which the poet presents and organises his material, i.e. language and (especially) naming.

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Christophe Cusset

## Etymology as a Poetic Resource among the Poets of Alexandria

Hellenistic poetry is particularly enamored with obscure facts of all kinds, whether because these are rare and often local, or because these are ancient and have become opaque. It is this very obscurity that justifies the poets' interest in what almost necessarily requires an explanation and the Hellenistic poets do not hesitate to introduce into their poetic discourses explicative parentheses that can take on the allure of more or less developed digressions. This poetry thus has a strong propensity for developing etiological discourse that compels a rational account of the world as it exists in the present,<sup>1</sup> and especially of its curiosities. The *aitia* that constitute, as a narrative on origins, the fundamental elements of this discourse can be concerned with natural phenomena (e.g. the origin of the spring Hippocrene in which Callimachus takes an interest in *Aitia* fr. 2 or the many accounts of catasterism that give an account of the stars in the sky),<sup>2</sup> on cults and their specifics, on the cultural institutions (foundations of cities were especially in vogue in the Hellenistic era: Apollonius of Rhodes composed a narrative on the foundation of Alexandria; see the account of the foundation of Cyrene in the *Hymn to Apollo*). And etymological inquiry has an important place also in etiological research, in particular on proper names inasmuch as these are often understood through a fundamental contradiction.<sup>3</sup> Inasmuch as it designates a unique reality (whether this concerns a person, a place or any other reality that can be individualized), the proper name does not make sense in and of itself; its meaning is the result of the designation of this reality qua distinct individual. At the same time, however, it appears that proper names, even if they may experience changes, are not foreign to the common language and seem thus to be the bearers in any case of the sense that, if it is hidden or does not appear immediately, is nonetheless present and susceptible to being the object of re-semanticization. It is here that the etymology of a proper name intervenes to discover in itself the micro-narrative it contains and it is the work of the poet then to develop this

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1 Callimachus shows a very developed practice of etiological writing. In his *Iambi*, half of the pieces have an explicitly etiological purpose, and he also wrote his *Aitia* in four books in which the poet presents a collection of *aitia* on cultural issues of various kinds. On a larger scale, the question of etiology is very common by Hellenistic poets (for instance, Apollonius Rhodius or Lycophron).

2 See for instance Pàmias i Massana/Zucker 2013, xliii–lxxvi.

3 See Cusset 2007, 191–232.

nominal micro-narrative or to use it to poetic ends. The importance of the phenomenon invites one to ask whether for the Hellenistic poets etymological curiosity is not just an erudite incidence inserted into the narrative but rather, sometimes, it is the poetic narrative that is constructed around this semantic combination.

This is what I intend to study here through several examples taken from Callimachus and Apollonius of Rhodes, between which one can sometimes establish a relationship. These examples, without being exhaustive of Alexandrian practice (one would want for example to analyze Lycophron's *Alexandra*<sup>4</sup> in detail and all the epigrams that assume a form of cryptogram),<sup>5</sup> should give a good glimpse into the complexity of etymological practice in Alexandrian poetry as well as into their poetic and metapoetic significance.

## 1 The explicit game of etymology: the taste for eponymy

If the Alexandrians have a marked taste for poetry's verbal dimension, this shows forth remarkably in their etymological practices, which allow them to develop their taste for the 'name' and to use the 'name' as a true poetic mine from which they can draw hidden resources. For the etymological practice in poetry does not consist of a diachronic inquiry that would seek to juxtapose two terms, the one contemporary the other more ancient or external to the language system, but in a synchronic reconciliation of two lexical features which are not the immediate object of this reconciliation. The poet's whole art is then to create a context, most often a narrative one, in which this lexical reconciliation may be used and produce meaning.

### 1.1 The case of the river called Callichorus

We encounter a certain number of cases where the etymological explanation forms a brief digression in the narrative, in that it introduces a brief secondary narrative and one disconnected from the principal one. This type of etymological digression appears to be caused by names that are seemingly transparent in their

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<sup>4</sup> See for instance Cusset 2007, 199–212.

<sup>5</sup> See Berra 2007, 261–276.



composition or derivation; these names, as explicit micro-narratives, are something of an appeal to the parasitical nature of etymological explanation. A good example is at lines 904–910 of Book 2 of the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes:

ῶκα δὲ Καλλιχόροιο παρὰ προχοᾶς ποταμοῖο  
 ἤλυθον, ἐνθ' ἐνέπουσι Διὸς Νυσήιον νῖα,  
 Ἰνδῶν ἡνίκα φύλα λιπὼν κατενάσσατο Θήβας,  
 ὀργιάσαι, στήσαι τε χοροὺς ἄντροιο πάροιθεν,  
 ὧ ἐν ἁμειδήτους ἀγίας ἡϋλίζετο νύκτας,  
ἐξ οὗ Καλλίχορον ποταμὸν περιναιετάοντες  
 ἤδὲ καὶ Αὐλῖον ἄντρον ἐπωνυμίην καλέουσιν.

Soon they passed the mouth of the Callichorus river, where, they say, Zeus' Nysean son, after leaving the tribes of the Indians and settling at Thebes, celebrated the rites and instituted choruses in front of the cave in which he had spent grim nights of rituals, and since then, the local inhabitants have called the river by the name of Callichorus and the cave Aulion. (transl. W. Race)

The principal narrative concerns the Argonauts' voyage toward Colchis: the succession of toponyms in the text corresponds to the displacement of individual figures in the fictional space. As such a succession risks being as monotonous as the accomplished maritime voyage, the poet gives a certain consistency to places that risk remaining simple names like points on a map. He does this by introducing a concurrent narrative that takes off from the name itself, which is the only salient element onto which the narrator can clutch. Here we can observe how the slippage from the principal narrative to the etymological digression operates in the combination of enjambment (imitating at the same time the displacement of the Argonauts and the slippage of the narrative) and the introduction of a subordinate relative that opens onto a secondary narrative.<sup>6</sup> The name Καλλιχόροιο draws our immediate attention due to its position in the first hemistich and the play of *homoiototeuton* with ποταμοῖο; it is this name (and the place it designates) that is the object of the following development. This secondary narrative is given straight off as a narrative assumed by a secondary anonymous narrator (ἐνέπουσι) and it immediately takes the reader into another mythological sphere—the movement of Dionysus. Naming Dionysus indicates that the digression is of an etymological type since the god is designated here by the definite description Διὸς Νυσήιον νῖα,<sup>7</sup> which constituted an implicit etymology of the

<sup>6</sup> On the literary sources used here by Apollonius, see Matteo 2007, 586.

<sup>7</sup> This very same clausula occurs at 4.1134 in another etiological context. On this etymology and the identification of Nysa, see Matteo 2007, 586–587.

name “Dionysus”, one that is not given here, as that would only be another etymology concerning the toponym. But this definite description of the god poses the very principal of identification of compound factors within an etymological inquiry. The principal is the one at work in the explanation of the name Καλλίχορος, without the decomposition being carried out in so precise a manner because only the second element of the compound finds justification in the phrase στήσαι τε χορούς. Rather than giving the complete etymology—this is no doubt of little use as the first element of the composite is topical and simply ornamental—the narrative connects with another element in the action Dionysus accomplishes, in coming to recognize a precise feature of the place of this dance, ἄντροιο πάροιθεν, which issues in a new etymological development, one unexpected this time, introduced according to the same technique of subordination (ὃ ἐν): the grotto is called Αὐλίον because Dionysus stayed there (ἠύλιζετο). This second development reinforces the passage’s digressive nature, as it does not seem that the Argonauts could have initially perceived the aforesaid grotto. The poet seems to want to play on the productivity of the etymology in the narrative, since the name ‘Dionysus’ and that of the grotto and the learned incomplete nature of the two etymological propositions is resolved in the superfluous character of the third etymology which is nothing but a development of the etymology motivated by the principal narrative, underlined in the final parallelism between Καλλίχορον ποταμὸν and Αὐλίον ἄντρον. The use of the present καλέουσιν, which attaches the etymological experience to the fictional present of the narration, in opposition to the time of the principal narrative and that of the secondary myth, comes to close the digressive parenthesis and to seal its etymological nature.

What is remarkable in this digression is the productivity of etymological practice that tends to flood the text either by the incomplete nature of the phenomena mentioned, or by the complementarity of phenomena among themselves, or again by their sequence. This variety of treatment shows the wealth of etymological approach, and at the same time its fragility.

## 1.2 The Mossynoecians

This is also what suggests another example, that of the etymology in the name Mossynoecian, in the same epic of Apollonius of Rhodes, for which two concurrent interpretations are given. The first proposed origin occurs relatively early in Book 2, in the prophecies that Phineas delivers to the Argonauts (lines 379–381):

τοῖς δ’ ἐπὶ Μοσσύνοικοι ὁμούριοι ὑλήεσσαν  
ἐξεῖης ἥπειρον ὑπωρείας τε νέμονται,

δουρατέοις ἑπύργοισιν ἐν οἰκία τεκτῆναντες  
 κάλινα καὶ πύργους εὐπηγέας, οὓς καλέουσιν  
 μόσσυνας, καὶ δ' αὐτοὶ ἐπώνυμοι ἐνθεν ἔασιν.

Next in order and sharing a border with them, the Mossynoecians inhabit the wooded plain and lower mountain slopes, having built their wooden homes within towers made of timber, along with sturdy towers they call 'mossynes,' and from these the people themselves take their name. (transl. Race)

In the narrative of the Argonauts' voyage that follows, the principal narrator, in his turn, takes up this etymology of the name of the Mossynoecians bringing to it several modifications (2.1005–1017):

ἱερὸν αὐτ' ἐπὶ τοῖσιν ὄρος καὶ γαῖαν ἄμειβον,  
 ἧ ἔνι Μοσσύνιοι καὶ ἄν' οὐρεα ναιετάουσι  
 μόσσυνας, καὶ δ' αὐτοὶ ἐπώνυμοι ἐνθεν ἔασιν.

Then, after these people, they passed a sacred mountain and the land where the Mossynoecians dwell in the mountains in "mossynes", and they take their own name from these.

The exact recall in line 1017 of line 381b, which is a very rare practice in Apollonius' epic, tempts one to think that the principal narrator is content with reproducing the etymology that Phineas gives. But this is not what happens: while for Phineas the "mossynes" are the name of the πύργους εὐπηγέας,<sup>8</sup> for the narrator it is a question of the place where the country's inhabitants live. The difference is perhaps not a large one, but it is worth at least noting that the principal narrator is less precise than the secondary one. This "negligence" is possibly voluntary in that it could have to do with the strange name in question, which is of Iranian origin: with a sort of feigned playfulness, the principal narrator would not more plainly take on the etymology that he borrows from another. This dwindling of information would imitate the principal of attrition on which linguistic evolution rests; in distancing himself from his source of information, the narrator in part loses the referent meant by μόσσυν; by doing this, he sets in motion a process exactly contrary to the one he displays in giving the etymology of this ethnic group. The etymology thus arises here not because of the transparent nature of the name, but on the contrary because of its opaque nature for the Greek-speaker.

All etymology appears as possibly being subject to variation of some kind through evolution, or through divergence in interpretation. Etymology does not thus seem to show assured knowledge, but rather constitutes an etiological re-

<sup>8</sup> At least in taking οἰκία and πύργους together as antecedents of οὓς.

servoir and narrative potential, susceptible of feeding all forms of discourse, digressive or not.

### 1.3 Asteria and Delos

Let's turn quickly to another example, this one from Callimachus, which marks that the island of Delos was earlier called Asteria (*Hymns* 4.36–38):

οὔνομα δ' ἦν τοι  
Ἀστερίη τὸ παλαιόν, ἐπεὶ βαθὺν ἤλαο τάφρον  
οὐρανόθεν φεύγουσα Διὸς γάμον ἀστέρι ἴση.

And you name of old was Asteria, since you leapt into the deep trough of ocean from heaven, fleeing a marriage with Zeus. (transl. Stephens)

Callimachus begins by imposing an etymological orientation in the first phrase with οὔνομα and τὸ παλαιόν. The island's former name is given at the opening of line 35; the name should come as a surprise, rather than the better-known alternative toponym “Ortygia”;<sup>9</sup> the etymological explanation that the causal (ἐπεὶ) develops, concludes at the clausula of the following verse after the bucolic diaeresis with the explanatory gloss ἀστέρι ἴση, where the hiatus promotes the etymological play on Asteria. Etymological research is the occasion of a *mise-en-scène* of the original figure of Asteria who, in fleeing from Zeus, seeks to remain pure (this is not a characteristic of the island in the Homeric hymn). Callimachus adopts a motif that he finds in Pindar, but from a very different perspective. What is important to Pindar is nature “resembling a star” and the island from an Olympian perspective; the island is a divine construction. Callimachus' conception is entirely different. For him, the name Asteria does not derive from ἄστρον, but from ἀστήρ, which better accounts for the name's form and Callimachus accentuates the resemblance in the placement of the two elements compared in lines 36–37. In particular, the change of suffix between ἄστρον and ἀστήρ has a semantic value. Both denote a fixed star; but the first can only have this sense, while the second can also be used of a trailing star. For Pindar Delos' fixity is essential. Callimachus, however, wants to underline the island's mobility. This, for him, is the island's characteristic trait. Finally, in Pindar Asteria and Delos are two contemporary names the one immortal, the other mortal, while for Callimachus the two names reflect an evolution of the form of existence from one to the

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<sup>9</sup> Hesiod knows Asteria as a sister of Leto, but Callimachus makes no allusion to this.

other. The etymology, which is explicitly proclaimed at the opening of the phrase, organizes the line through symmetry, while the reversed movement of the explication doubles the vertical movement of the nymph Asteria's leap from the sky into the sea.<sup>10</sup> There is thus an apparent desire to associate here the linguistic phenomenon to the mythological episode, independent of any chronological logic: the name Asteria is explained with a mythological episode that occurs later than the nymph's naming, but corresponds to the nymph's metamorphosis into an island. All of this occurs as though the mythological episode were to confirm the micro-narrative of which the name was the sign from the beginning, as though the attribution of a name were the equivalent of the attribution of a destiny, as though the eponym were not a simple linguistic phenomenon, but brought with it at the same time a complete network of meaning and consequence.<sup>11</sup>

What seems to interest the poet with these explicit etymologies is the phenomenon of eponym and the possibility at the same time of identifying the figure who gives a name—even if this is a collective agent—as well as justifying the attribution of the name. In inverting the eponym process through the archaeological and etiological analysis in which the poet indulges, because it is a question of passing from the effect of this linguistic product stated at the beginning, rather

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**10** The celestial origin (οὐρανόθεν) is not further defined but connotes the idea of purity and suggests the establishment of a vivid vertical movement from high to low, and paradoxically to bring the image of the island from a low level to the height of its preserved purity; the celestial origin is already the beginning of the explanation of its programmatic name: Asteria, in passing from heaven to the sea becomes 'like a star' which falls, a shooting star, and the comparison allows, in addition to the *a posteriori* onomastic explanation, rendering back to the island its lost celestial dignity.

**11** The rapidly evoked history of Asteria calls forth also, by contrast, that of Leto, who did not escape union with Zeus. Leto is mentioned at line 39 where she is qualified as χρυσέη, which signals her divinity in this first apparition and is also a proleptic qualification that announces the birth of Apollo when all is transformed into gold (lines 260–264). Leto and Asteria are presented here as strangers to one another, which re-enforces the opposite nature of their relations with Zeus, while in some traditions they are presented as sisters. Here this is not the case, as Leto's intervention is necessary to produce the essential transformation of Asteria into Delos. Leto's gold, which will illuminate the island and transform its nature, will confer upon it a divine character and render necessary the onomastic change evoked at line 40. The prominent position at the line ends of the names Λητώ and Δῆλος, retaining the vocalic color but a metathesis of consonant articulations (liquid/dental) well highlights the association of goddess and island in the line. The anaphora of τόπρᾱ in these same lines 39–40 underlines the parallelism of the crossed destinies of Leto and Delos. From the opening of this narrative of the history of Delos, this reference draws attention to the future destiny of the island, called no longer to be a wandering island and to change its name.

than transforming a given fact (which may be historical, or ethnographic, or of some other nature) into a linguistic witness of this event, the poet desacralizes onomastic phenomena in that they become assignable to a precise cause; in doing this, the poet re-affirms a form of authority over his poetic discourse because to possess an etymology is a legitimation for developing an explanatory discourse, without leaving the poetic and language sphere in which the poet operates. This creative potential of the name that the poet masters through giving its etymology is also the work of implicit etymologies, where the poet is content to suggest an etymological explanation.

## 2 The implicit play of etymological allusion: from name to narrative

### 2.1 The Couretes in obscurity

If there are many instances where the poet explains the etymological process, this process is more often left in the shadows than revealed, which does not however stop it from being operable.<sup>12</sup> Thus Callimachus in the *Hymn to Zeus* evokes the Couretes who surround the first years of Zeus on Mt. Ida (*Hymns* 1.52–54):

οὔλα δὲ Κούρητές σε περὶ πρύλιν ὠρχήσαντο  
τεύχεα πεπλήγοντες, ἵνα Κρόνος οὔασιν ἤχην  
ἀσπίδος εἰσαῖοι καὶ μὴ σεο κουρίζοντος.

And the Couretes danced the war dance around you with vigor, beating on their shields so  
Cronus would hear the clash of the shield and not your infant crying. (transl. Stephens)

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<sup>12</sup> There can be cases where, without being explicit, the etymological process is clear, as in the case of the island of Philyra, which takes its name from the episode where Philyra sleeps with Cronos (2.1231–1235): Νυκτὶ δ' ἐπιπλομένη *Φιλυρηίδα* νήσον ἄμειβον/ ἔνθα μὲν Οὐρανίδης *Φιλύρῃ* Κρόνος, εὖτ' ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ/Τιτίνων ἦνασσε, ὁ δὲ Κρηταῖον ὑπ' ἄντρον/Ζεὺς ἔτι Κουρήτεσι μετετρέφετ' Ἰδαίοισι,/Ρεῖην ἐξαπαφών παρελέξατο... The vertical reading and the identical recall (with a passage from noun to adjective) of the anthroponym in the toponym shows quite clearly, without the etymological process being explicit, that the narrative of the mythological episode has its only end in explaining the name. The narrative parenthesis, which comes from the spatial adverb ἔνθα, allows the assumption of two narratives, a principal narrative and a secondary one, for reasons which are not narrative but etiological. I do not think one can speak here of explicit etymology in the proper sense of the term, *pace* Valverde Sanchez 1989, 66.

The evocation of the divine nursling lays stress on his noise-making and on the dance that the Kouretes accomplish to hide the baby's wailings. However, other than the effects of assonance in dentals and gutturals or the use of rare terms like *πρύλις*,<sup>13</sup> the passage suggests, without explication, an etymology of *Κούρητες* by relationship with the participle *κουρίζοντος*. There would then be a translation of Zeus' infantile nature to the designation of those who surround him; there is on the one hand the close proximity between Zeus and the Kouretes, expressed both semantically (*οὔλα*) and stylistically through the placements of words in line 52, and on the other hand the phenomenon of sonorous substitution (the sound of arms rather than the cries of an infant) that justifies the onomastic slippage from protected to protectors. Callimachus thus sets in motion a double phenomenon of metonymy through synecdoche and through equivalence to justify the name Kouretes, without revealing his etymological approach as such. It may well be the etymology that justifies the evocation here of the Kouretes' dance.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.2 The synonym interface

The implicit character of an etymology can be strengthened when the relationship between the name and the etymon is masked by the substitution of a synonym, and the text does not offer more direct support for the etymology, but uses a cipher to strengthen the divergence while suggesting an echo and to complicate the etymological play in a sort of linguistic spiral. This ambiguous process, which may at the same time effect a bringing together and a setting apart, can be illustrated with the evocation of the river Parthenius in Book 2 of the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes (lines 936–939):

καὶ δὴ Παρθενίοιο ῥοὰς ἀλμυρῆεντος,  
 πρηντάτου ποταμοῦ, παρεμέτρεον, ᾧ ἔνι κούρη  
 Λητωῖς, ἄγρηθεν ὅτ' οὐρανὸν εἰσαναβαίνει,  
 ὃν δέμας ἡμερτοῖσιν ἀναψύχει ὑδάτεσσιν.

<sup>13</sup> *Πρύλις* is a word in Cretan dialect (or Cypriot ? according to Cahen) which signifies an armed dance. Used as an accusative of an internal object. It is attested only in the *Iliad* and the Hesiodic *Shield*, where it is always appears in the plural in the sense of “foot-soldier”. Here in the singular the term designates a dance.

<sup>14</sup> I note here only for instance the etymology suggested by simple juxtaposition of the words *Μίμας* and *μῖμνειν* in the *Hymn to Delos* (*Hymni* 4.67–69).

And so they passed the streams of Parthenius that flows into the sea, a most gentle river, in which Leto's daughter, when from the hunt she goes up to heaven, cools her body with its pleasing waters. (transl. Race)

The reference to the river Parthenius occurs during the narrative of the Argonauts' journey to Colchis; the river is only a geographical reference in the itinerary they follow, as the boat does not stop there: the river, which is not the setting of an episode in the principal narrative, can become the place of a secondary narrative that the subordinate relative pronoun introduces with ὃ ἐνι at the bucolic dieresis of line 937. The essentially masculine context of the principal narrative contrasts with the feminine atmosphere of the secondary narrative, as though there was no other point of contact between them than the pivot that the relative pronoun constitutes. However, the alliteration in 'p' of line 937 signals a particular attention on the part of the poet, who seems to indicate a development from the term Παρθένιος; the actual development is not however in the alliterative play, but in the relative narrative that follows: the narrative concerning the bath of the virgin Artemis offers itself as a hidden etymology for the name of the river. The name Παρθένιος evokes the supreme *parthenos*, who is Artemis, designated by the definite description κούρη/Λητωίς which offers the term κούρη as a substitute for παρθένος, and as there must be a link established between the river and the goddess, the option of a refreshing bath for the huntress is retained and given plausibility by the languid course of the river. We see here a reversal of the very principal that etymology produces: rather than bringing enlightenment to a proper name, here the etymology serves to raise a partially hidden narrative that certainly brings the illumination desired, but which also opens onto another dimension, since then the etiological narrative is not posed as such and is limited to the sole function of explanation.

This implicit effect can be strengthened when the onomastic filters are even more complex, to the point that the etymological play may pass completely unnoticed. There is a good example in the *Hymn to Zeus* in the evocation of Rhea's delivery (*Hymns* 1.15–20):

ἐνθα σ' ἐπεὶ μήτηρ μεγάλων ἀπεθήκατο κόλπων,  
αὐτίκα δίζητο ῥόον ὕδατος, ὃ κε τόκοιο  
λύματα χυτλώσαιτο, τεὸν δ' ἐνὶ χρώτα λοέσσαι.  
Λάδων ἀλλ' οὐπω μέγας ἔρρεεν οὐδ' Ἐρύμανθος,  
λευκότατος ποταμῶν, ἔτι δ' ἄβροχος ἦεν ἅπασα  
Ἀζηνίς· μέλλεν δὲ μάλ' εὐδρος καλέεσθαι...

From the moment when your mother produced you from her great womb, immediately she searched for a stream of water in which she might cleanse the afterbirth, and therein might wash your body. But the mighty Ladon was not yet flowing, nor was the Erymanthus, the



whitest of waters, and the whole of Azenis was not yet irrigated. But thereafter it was to be called well irrigated. (transl. Stephens)

By a humorous reversal Rhea's search in a place without running water is the occasion for a paradigmatic unrolling of the names of the rivers of Arcadia:<sup>15</sup> poetic abundance allows for compensation of the aquatic absence; the lack of water itself nourishes verbal superabundance. The two principal rivers evoked the Ladon and the Erymanthus (line 18) are not well-known names and Callimachus changes their meaning.<sup>16</sup> Callimachus searches for the *paronomasia* ἔρρεεν ... Ἐρύμανθος to develop the motif of the current: this alliteration invites the reader to establish a direct link with Rhea's name, most likely an etymological allusion.<sup>17</sup>

From this same perspective, we should categorically refuse the text edited by Cahen for line 20: Ἀρκαδίη is evidence of a gloss introduced into the text transmitted in the direct tradition; preferable is Ἀζηνίς of the indirect tradition, given by all other editors, without which the etymological play in the passage is not apparent. There is further a play of etymological words in ἄβροχος and Ἀζηνίς: ἄβροχος "without rain" is the equivalent of Ἀζηνίς "without Zeus"<sup>18</sup>/ἄ-ζην "without life" or "without water".<sup>19</sup> It is fairly clear that Callimachus wants to establish a strong link between the birth of Zeus and the appearance of water and this is the reason that drives him to situate the event in Arcadia, which he can designate by metonymy with the name Ἀζηνίς. This insistence on the motif of flowing water seems to me to be understandable also from a metapoetic perspective,<sup>20</sup> in that a course of water is a rather common metaphor for Callimachus' poetry. The whole interest of the *Hymn to Zeus* is in showing how the birth of Zeus is the occasion for the appearance of water in Arcadia: yet this region of herdsmen is a space rather claimed by poetry and Callimachus' hymn gives material proof that the

15 This hydrographic digression allows Callimachus to show his geographic erudition, he was himself the author of a treatise Περὶ ποταμῶν (fr. 457 Pf.).

16 Ἐρύμανθος is a Homeric hapax (*Od.* 6.103), used here by homotaxis, but the word in Homer designates a mountain, not a river.

17 The etymology attaching the name Rhea to the verb ῥεῖν occurs already in Plato's *Cratylus* 402bc.

18 See the first word of the hymn and its form: Ζηνός.

19 A natural phenomenon well known in antiquity concerns the lake of Φενεός in Arcadia, which could disappear and reappear, a result of its being fed by subterranean courses of water: this curiosity is perhaps the point of departure for Callimachus' remarks on Arcadia-Azenia without water.

20 See especially the end of Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* (*Hymns* 2.105–112) and Asper 1997, 109–134.

birth of Zeus is also an occasion for the production of poetic material. What matters here for Arcadia is that, from being deprived of water and of Zeus, as the compound Ἀζηνίς suggests, heightened by the enjambment typical of Callimachean style, the country can change its name and afterwards be qualified as εὐσδρος (20): we see that the development emerges onto a problem of qualification or of naming (καλέεσθαι);<sup>21</sup> the balance between before and after, as well as the association of the name Ἀζηνίς with ἄβροχος, invites the audience to associate εὐσδρος with the region's new name, that is Ἀρκαδίη, and we might wonder whether Callimachus is not suggesting here again an implicit etymology; the country that was deprived of water and of Zeus was called before Ἀζηνίς “the land without Zeus/without water”, but once it witnessed the birth of Zeus and bore courses of water associated with this name it became that Land which possesses Zeus in sufficient amount (ἄρκέω, Δία). This second implicit etymology rests this time on the absence of one of the linking elements, which we must restore by association and semantic equivalence. The etymological reflection at work in the text turns out thus to be generative, as it here supports the reading to be constructed.

### 3 Poetry of etymology and etiology of poetic discourse

Etymological observation is not an erudite excrescence in poetic discourse, but rather allows the assurance of a link between past and present (which is essential for Alexandrian poets) and the entertaining of a spirit of complicity between the poet and his reader. While offering a serious and rational discourse on the world, the etymological *aitia* facilitate the accentuation of linguistic curiosities in catching onto poetic tradition, and in showing nominal reality within a new and unexpected aspect. In Callimachus etymological games are essential moments in a system of allusion and reference that contributes to complicating the intertextual structures of these poems and to constructing a meta-discourse of the poet on his

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<sup>21</sup> See the name Ἀπιδανῆες, Callimachus' invention ... or an old name for the Arcadians. This proper name is itself the bearer of sense and the chief part of an important etiological potential which is not suggested, but which is at work throughout the passage. This proper name can first of all signal that the Peloponnese is the 'land of Apis', not of an ancient king of Sparta or of Argos. But it is in particular the bearer of a wordplay on the noun πῖδαξ; the Arcadians are men “without water sources”, as Arcadia is land without water.

own poetic work. With Callimachus, the etymologies are not only linguistic links between present and past, but above all are living rocks that take part in the construction of a world of words: what interests Callimachus in etymological discourse is perhaps rather a discourse of etymology itself: it is less the revealed origin of a name than the revealing itself of the origin, as this revealing is essentially poetic. What is of interest, then, to Callimachus in etymological research is its precisely poetic dimension, creating and recreating from words. What allows and suggests an etymological game in the poetic text is the very work of reading which should result from poetic composition. The poet begins a game with his reader who brings the text to life in a movement that comports with one who knows the history of the words. The etymological game imposes thus from the interior of a text a homology with poetic writing itself, which knows a before and after.

### 3.1 Etymology and poetic writing around Apollo

This homology seems to be what is at work in the explanation of the ritual cry “ie Paian” that occurs in Callimachus’ *Hymn to Apollo* (*Hymns* 2.97–104):

ἰὴ ἰὴ παιῶν ἀκούομεν, οὐνεκα τοῦτο  
 Δελφός τοι πρῶτιστον ἐφύμνιον εὔρετο λαός,  
 ἦμος ἐκηβολίην χρυσέων ἐπεδείκνυστο τόξων.  
 Πυθῶ τοι κατιόντι συνήντετο δαιμόνιος θήρ,  
 αἰνὸς ὄφις. Τὸν μὲν σὺ κατήναρες ἄλλον ἐπ’ ἄλλῳ  
 βάλλων ὠκὺν ὀϊστόν, ἐπηῦτῃσε δὲ λαός·  
 ἴη ἰὴ παιῶν, ἵει βέλος, εὐθύ σε μήτηρ  
 γείνατ’ ἄοσητῆρα· τὸ δ’ ἐξέτι κεῖθεν ἀείδη.

We hear *hie, hie, paiëon*, because the people of Delphi first devised this refrain, when you demonstrated the launching of your golden weapons. When you were going down to Pytho a demonic beast met you, a dire serpent. You slew him, shooting one swift arrow after another, and the people cried: “*hie, hie paiëon*, shoot your arrow, a savior from the time when your mother gave birth to you.” And from that point you are hymned in this way.

The etymological *aition* opens with the verb ἀκούομεν, which not only continues the fiction of the décor in the immediate present of the ceremony which juxtaposes the participants (but here the reader is included in this “we”) with the mythical past evoked, but also draws attention to the sound of the cry on which Callimachus bases his etymology. The cry, institutionalized as a πρῶτιστον ἐφύμνιον (εὔρετο λαός 97/τὸ δ’ ἐξέτι κεῖθεν ἀείδη 104), is underlined by the

anaphora ἰὴ ἰὴ παιῶν at the beginning of lines 97 and 103, which assures a permanence and even a continuity of the Delphians at Cyrene, and from there to the reader. The history of Pytho's slaying is reported to give the origin of the ritual cry made explicit by ἦι βέλος, initially a cry of encouragement cast at the serpent's death by the Delphians, at the same time it stands out with the participle βάλλων associated by assonance with ἄλλον ἐπ' ἄλλω, an etymological play on the name of Apollo as "caster of missiles" (βέλος, ἐκβολήν).<sup>22</sup> The explanation, however, maintains a certain ambiguity because if it invites us to compare ἰή and ἦι through their sound proximity, the term παιῶν seems to be the occasion of a more complex interpretation:<sup>23</sup> the presence of μήτηρ invites us to see here an allusion to the vocative παῖ, while the complement βέλος suggests a juxtaposition of the verb παίω and the rare term ἄοσητήρα suggests a gloss on the epiclesis Παιῶν. By thus evoking the origin of the ritual cry, Callimachus establishes a tight parallel between a one-time event and the following ritual celebration: the 'we' of the celebrants untiringly reproduces the cry the people of Delos let out; with this etymological narrative, Callimachus inserts an etymological explanation into his hymn that equates the passage from πρώτιστον ἐφύμνιον to the present song, which is none other than the hymn of Callimachus itself. The poet's song thus finds its origin in the ritual cry and it is the explanation of the cry that produces the poetic material. The reader, who is implicated in the ritual 'we', finds himself invited to reproduce the same development taking off from Callimachus' song, which the poet has effected via the initial cry.

<sup>22</sup> Note that ἐκβολήν is a Homeric *hapax* (Il. 5.54).

<sup>23</sup> The interpretation that Apollonius of Rhodes proposes is limited to the juxtaposition between ἦι and the verb ἦμι in Arg. 2.705–714: ὥς ποτε πετραίῃ ὑπὸ δειράδι Παρνηρσοῖο/Δελφύνην τόξοισι πελώριον ἐξενάρειεν,/κοῦρος ἑὼν ἔτι γυμνός, ἔτι πλοκάμοισι γεγηθώς: (ἰλήκοις· αἰεὶ τοι, ἄναξ, ἄτμητοι ἔθιραι,/αἰὲν ἀδήλητοι, τὼς γὰρ θέμις, οἴοθι δ' αὐτῇ/Λητώ Κοιογένεια φίλαις ἐνὶ χερσὶν ἀφάσσει)./πολλὰ δὲ Κωρύκiai νύμφαι, Πλειστοῖο θυγάτρες,/θαρσύνεσκον ἔπεσιν, "ἦ ἦ" κεκληγυῖαι./ἔνθεν δὴ τότε καλὸν ἐφύμνιον ἔπλετο Φοῖβω: how once upon a time beneath Parnassus' rocky ridge the god killed monstrous Delphynes with his arrows, when he was still a naked boy, still delighting in his long locks—be gracious, lord, may your hair always remain unshorn, always unharmed, for such is right, and only Leto herself, Coeus' daughter, strokes it with her dear hands—and often did the Corcyian nymphs, the daughters of Pleistus, encourage him with their words, as they shouted Iêie. From there arose this beautiful refrain for Phoebus" (transl. Race).

### 3.2 Neda as an image of poetic activity

Etymological research, however, is not only an effect of reception; all poetic activity is symbolized and signified by onomastic play. Thus, we see what significance the figure of Neda takes on in the *Hymn to Zeus* (*Hymns* 1.32–38):

ἐκ δ' ἔχεεν μέγα χεῦμα· τόθι χροά φαιδρύνασα,  
 ὦνα, τὸν σπείρωσε, Νέδη δέ σε δῶκε κομίσσαι  
 κευθμὸν ἔσω Κρηταῖον, ἵνα κρύφα παιδεύοιο,  
 πρεσβυτάτῃ Νυμφέων, αἱ μιν τότε μαιώσαντο,  
 πρωτίστῃ γενεῇ μετὰ γε Στύγα τε Φιλύρην τε.  
 οὐδ' ἀλίην ἀπέτεισε θεὴ χάριν, ἀλλὰ τὸ χεῦμα  
 κεῖνο Νέδην ὀνόμηνε.

and a great stream of water poured forth. There she washed your body, O Lord, and swaddled you, and gave you to Neda to carry to a Cretan hideaway, to rear you in secret. She was the eldest of the Nymphs who attend her as midwives in the earliest generation after Styx and Philyra. Nor did the goddess reward her with an empty favor, but named that flow, Neda. (transl. Stephens)

A series of superlatives valorize the nymph (πρεσβυτάτῃ 35, πρωτίστῃ 36) because she plays the role of midwife at Rhea's delivery. Neda, however, undergoes an interesting textual transformation: at the moment when she bears off Zeus to hide him, she disappears physically and her absence finds compensation by an onomastic transfer onto the river that Rhea has caused to flow forth, which is the equivalent of a metamorphosis the nymph undergoes; it is Rhea herself who effects the attribution of her name (ὀνόμηνε), affirmation that the goddess holds a tight link to the linguistic material; the river itself is not situated precisely as the particle ποθι indicates, which accords with Neda's secret life. All of this emphasis on a figure who is in fact secondary, Neda, allows the poet to highlight the meta-poetic function of the *aition*: Rhea is in effect at the same time the origin of a new course of water in Arcadia and the origin of the denomination of this course of water by the transfer of the name of the nymph that assisted her. The motif of labor and childbirth is tightly combined with that of the presence of water in Arcadia around a pun on the term Ἀζηνίς which we discussed above. This homology between the birth of Zeus and the appearance of the spring can at the same time be read from a metapoetic perspective, as running water is symbolic of poetic production for Callimachus. So, in praising Zeus, and in going back to the origin of his birth—notably in the mother of the goddess, Rhea, whose name is itself associated with running water—this is at the same time to the origin of the poetic word toward which Callimachus intends to lead his reader. And this is precisely what reveals etymological research and its operation.

## 4 Conclusion

It seems then that the Alexandrian poets show a recurrent interest in modifications of names of places that are often associated with etiological inquiries into cults. In a more general sense, these poets are interested in proper nouns (both toponyms and anthroponyms) and in their semantic bearing, which they try to delimit, through associations at once ludic and serious, with common nouns. In the body of onomastic research, they pursue a poetry of naming, without the audience knowing whether the mythological narrative is the occasion for an etymological excursus or whether it is the origin of the name that brings about a complete narrative to justify the anchoring of the name in question in a precise context. The relations that we can establish between the micro-narratives, i.e. the proper names, and the etymological interpretation seeks to re-semanticize, and the mythological narratives in which these ‘etymological narratives’ are inserted are an essential principle of Alexandrian poetry, such that the digression which appears to constitute an etymology is more explanatory and programmatic than actually digressive.<sup>24</sup>

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Andrea Filoni

## The Use of Etymology in Apollodorus' ΠΕΡΙ ΘΕΩΝ and in its Reader Porphyry: Scientific or Ideological?

Ancient etymology is a free, intuitive, unpredictable operation;<sup>1</sup> yet, in some authors, it can be conducted according to some 'rules'. The existence of such 'rules' entails that etymology, its core still remaining intuitive, will move along certain paths, preferring some starting points to others and eluding certain 'forbidden' conclusions. I define this kind of etymology as 'scientific', and I shall try to show that it is typical of Apollodorus' treatise *On the Gods* (Περὶ θεῶν, henceforth ΠΘ).

This 24-book work aimed to reconstruct the very essence of the Greek gods. The correct etymology of their names and epithets is a fundamental tool; iconography, rites and cults (the Attic ones play an important role) are also employed. Its sources are the antiquarian literature, well known to the learned Apollodorus, and poetry—mostly Homer, who is a primary source. The Poet is read and interpreted according to Aristarchus' method: Apollodorus was the latter's disciple throughout the course of his life.<sup>2</sup> Philosophical reference points include the Stoics, from Cleanthes to the contemporary Antipater of Tarsus, who furnished Apollodorus with several etymologies, and who, though their interpretations are not always followed, certainly provided significant inspiration.<sup>3</sup> This does not make

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1 See Sluiter 2015, 897, 904; Tsitsibakou-Vasalos 2007, 6, 29.

2 In this respect, the introduction to ΠΘ fragments by Jacoby 1926, 753–761, is key, concerning the nature of the work, its unclear structure, the idea of divinity expressed by its author, the latter's relation with Platonism, Stoicism and Aristarchus' doctrine. The commentary on the fragments is unsatisfying according to the editor himself: see Jacoby 1926, 753. See also Reinhardt 1910, to be read through Jacoby's critical lenses. Studies on ΠΘ have nowadays reached a standstill, apart from an excellent work on Athena's epithets by Henrichs 1975, some studies about one of the few papyrological *testimonia* of the work (*P.Oxy.* 2260: De Luca 1999; Essler 2009; *P.Köln.* 3.126: Pellé 2005; Pellé 2009) and some efforts of mine (Filoni 2014; Filoni 2015; Filoni 2018). About Aristarchus' method, see now Schironi 2018.

3 On the role of the Stoics in ΠΘ, see Jacoby 1926, 757. In Apollodorus, etymology is a primary tool for allegorical interpretations as in the Stoics: see Reinhardt 1910, 118: "ad veram deorum cognitionem non per fabulas patere aditum putabat sed per nominum cognominumque interpretationem"; Jacoby 1926, 757; Most 1989, 2027. On Stoic allegory, Most 1989 and Long 1992 have made significant strides forward; see also Boys-Stones 2003. With Most (1989, 2023–2026), I consider allegory an interpretatorial activity applied to any kind of evidence, which includes etymology. Long 1992, 54 is less convincing in distinguishing etymology from allegory, the latter intended as the interpretation of narratives alone. In any case, Apollodorus, like the first Stoics,

ΠΘ a philosophical work: it is the treatise of a grammarian, a precise interpreter of literature, in particular of Homer, an experienced scholar, now interested in—and committed to—a theological topic.<sup>4</sup>

By examining Porphyry of Tyre (3rd–4th centuries CE),<sup>5</sup> a passionate reader and witness of ΠΘ, we shall observe how this ‘scientific’ use of etymology was dying down. It is not easy to distinguish Apollodorus’ interpretations within Porphyry’s account: sometimes we can look to alternative witnesses—which are not without problems themselves—and sometimes we are alone before Porphyry’s account. As we will see, the works of the latter also came to us in excerpted or epitomized form. Firstly, I’ll describe the Porphyrian work we are dealing with (the treatise *On the Divine Names*?), which we can read in shortened form in the so-called ‘solar theology’, the speech by Vettius Praetextatus (Macr. *Sat.* I.17–23), according to which all the gods of paganism were to be identified with the sun (§ 1.1). In this work Porphyry drew massively from ΠΘ, mostly in the chapters devoted to Apollo (fr. 95 of Jacoby’s edition). The section on Apollo’s epithet πατῆρ, in short space, shows the complex stratigraphy of his ‘solar theology’ (§ 1.3). After this general, necessary overview I shall try to reconstruct Apollodorus’ interpretation of some of Apollo’s epithets, mostly of a pastoral nature, such as νόμιος (§ 2.1), λύκιος, λυκηγενής and λυκοκτόνος (§ 2.2); the case of Apollo σμινθεύς exemplifies a situation where Porphyry is the only witness (§ 2.3). Finally, some reflections will be made about Apollodorus’ and Porphyry’s treatment of these epithets (§ 3).

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does not seem to embrace allegory in the sense described by Long. A broad definition of allegory does not prevent the identification of the precise tools employed and of the role played by etymology in allegories. On allegory in Porphyry, see Pepin 1966; Simonini 1986, 9–17; Girgenti 1997, 49–53.

<sup>4</sup> According to Jacoby 1926, 756, ΠΘ, such as the *Commentary on the Catalogue of Ships* (Περὶ τοῦ νεῶν καταλόγου), is “eine interpretatorische Leistung”.

<sup>5</sup> A growing interest in Porphyry has developed in recent decades: see Karamanolis-Sheppard 2007, 1–5. A balanced estimation of Porphyrian studies of the last century can be found in Smith 1987; this scholar produced an excellent edition of Porphyry’s fragments (Smith 1993). The existence of a critical edition of Porphyry’s work allows scholars to establish the importance of the man and his philosophical originality: see Smith 2007.



# 1 The philological scenario

## 1.1 The 'solar theology'

244 *FGrHist* 95 includes most of the Apollinian chapter from the so-called 'solar theology' in Macrobius *Sat.* I.17–23. The latter is the long and learned exposition by Vettius Praetextatus, *praesul omnium sacrorum*, where he 'demonstrates' that all the gods of paganism—mostly Greek and Roman, but not only these—are to be identified with the sun.<sup>6</sup>

Between Apollodorus and Macrobius there is an important mediation. The reconstruction here accepted identifies it within a Neoplatonic work, probably by Porphyry of Tyre (3rd–4th centuries CE), who drew material from ΠΘ; this Neoplatonic work, in turn, was epitomised by Macrobius.<sup>7</sup>

Into this Greek Neoplatonic body was inserted a large number of short and long annotations about Roman culture—as if the latter had not been considered so much in the Greek source. These annotations describe events in Roman history;<sup>8</sup> report cult etiologies;<sup>9</sup> add Latin parallels useful to the argumentation of the Greek work, such as epithets,<sup>10</sup> names of months,<sup>11</sup> cults,<sup>12</sup> or linguistic parallels;<sup>13</sup> offer etymologies of Latin terms;<sup>14</sup> mention Latin authors;<sup>15</sup> and constantly—so constantly that I do not enumerate the cases—translate the

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6 Bibliography on the 'solar theology' is wide—and proposing different views, which cannot be dealt with here: Goldlust 2007; Liebeschuetz 1999; Mastandrea 1979, 169–180; Flamant 1977, 653–680; Altheim 1966, 199–243; Altheim 1951; Courcelle 1948, 16–20. The existence of the 'solar theology' is a great objection against those who argue that Macrobius was a Christian, like Cameron 2011, 25–29: see Van Nuffelen 2016, 129. On the solar cult in imperial times, see Wallraff 2001, 27ff.; Berrens 2004; Chiaï 2013, 227, with bibliography.

7 See Reinhardt 1910, 104; Courcelle 1948, 18; Altheim 1953, 21–25; Flamant 1977, 654–655; Mastandrea 1979, 169–180. The thesis of Wissowa 1880, 35–41, according to which Macrobius depended on Iamblichus' works, is now rejected: see Reinhardt 1910, 103–104; Mastandrea 1979, 172.

8 I.23, 14–16.

9 I.17, 25–30 (the foundation of *ludi Apollinares*, the most extensive addition).

10 I.17, 42; 17, 64; 19, 3; 22, 2.

11 I.21, 6.

12 I.17, 15; 21, 10; 23, 13.

13 I.17, 7 (*solem*); 17, 15 (*apellentem*); 17, 39 (*lucem*).

14 I.21, 15 (*bruma*).

15 I.17, 4 (Vergilius); 17, 9 (Cornificius); 17, 33 (Cornificius); 17, 34 (Vergilius); 17, 61–62 (Cornificius); 18, 4 (Varro, Granius); 18, 16 (Naevius); 18, 19–21 (Cornelius Labeo); 18, 23–24 (Vergilius); 21, 23 (Vergilius); 23, 1–9 (a long quotation from Cornificius, where Homer, Cleanthes, Posidonius, Plato are mentioned). About C. Labeo and Cornificius, see below.

etymologies of the Greek source. These Latin annotations are not essential to the general structure of the Greek body, which can stand on its own; accordingly, they do not seem to belong to the core of the work. Macrobius could well be their author;<sup>16</sup> the case, however, is more complex than it seems.

In the ‘solar theology’, at *Sat.* I.18, 21, the name of Porphyry’s Roman disciple Cornelius Labeo is mentioned. J. Lydus, who knows Labeo’s *Fasti*<sup>17</sup> but not Macrobius, reports information strikingly similar to the ‘solar theology’, *Latin additions included*. I quote an example from those collected by Mastandrea:<sup>18</sup>

**Tab. 2:** Latin additions in Macrobius and Lydus.

Macr. <i>Sat.</i> I.17,7	J. Lydus <i>de Mens.</i> II.4
<i>Apollinis nomen multiplici interpretatione ad Solem refertur ... Chrysippus Apollinem [sc. cognominatum scribit] ὅτι μόνος ἐστὶ καὶ οὐχὶ πολλοί.</i> <i>Nam et Latinitas eum, quia tantam claritudinem solus obtinuit, Solem vocavit.</i>	ἀναφέρεται ἡ μονὰς εἰς Ἀπόλλωνα, τουτέστιν εἰς τὸν ἕνα ἥλιον, ὃς Ἀπόλλων λέγεται διὰ τὸ ἄπωθεν εἶναι τῶν πολλῶν.  καὶ Ῥωμαῖοι αὐτὸν Σόλεμ ἦτοί μόνον λέγουσι.
<i>Apollo’s name is related to the sun by many paths of understanding ... Chrysippus (1095 SVF) (writes that the sun was named Apollo) ... because the sun is one and not many (polloi)—for Latin, too, called him sun (Sol) because he alone (solus) is so bright. (transl. Kaster)</i>	the monas is related to Apollo, i.e. Helios who is one, which is named Apollo since he is far from being many (polloi). The Romans also named him Sun (Sol) i.e. unique (solus). (my translation)

This can only mean that: 1) a work very similar to the ‘solar theology’—i.e. a Greek core with Latin additions—is to be attributed to Labeo; 2) Macrobius did not directly epitomise Porphyry, but the Labeonian treatise; 3) the fact that the Latin additions are known to Lydus implies that Labeo is their author, or at least that

<sup>16</sup> So Wissowa 1880, 4–6; on this line of thought, see Courcelle, who attributes Macrobius great philosophical autonomy and the direct reading of Plotinus and Porphyry: see Courcelle 1948, 18; Flamand 1977, 677.

<sup>17</sup> See Mastandrea 1979, 21–23, 49–50, 53, 59–65, 68–69.

<sup>18</sup> See Mastandrea 1979, 170–171. Further elements indicated by the scholar are the use of typical *auctores* of his, like Cornificius (*Sat.* I.23, 2), and the distinction between ‘mythical’ and ‘physical’ explanations.

he produced most of them (Macrobius may have added some of his own).<sup>19</sup> Further, the preservation of a massive Greek core suggests that Labeo's work resembled a Latin edition of the Greek work.<sup>20</sup>

If we overlook the Latin additions, we may be able to recover the Greek Neoplatonic work, though in shortened form; apparently, Macrobius still gives us a good general idea of this work. The latter seems to include a proem (I.17, 2–6) which mentions Plotinus, Porphyry's beloved teacher, and the treatise proper. The latter exhibits an elementary *Ring-komposition*: it deals with Apollo and Zeus, the main gods of paganism, respectively at the very beginning and at the end (I.17, 7–70 and 23, 1–20):

**Tab. 3:** Structure of the 'solar theology'.

'proem'	I.17, 2–6	5 parr.
Apollo	I.17, 7–70	64 parr.
Dionysus	I.18, 1–24	24 parr.
Mars	I.19, 1–6	6 parr.
Mercurius	I.19, 7–18	12 parr.
Aesculapius	I.20, 1–5	5 parr.
Hercules	I.20, 6–12	7 parr.
Isis, Serapis	I.20, 13–18	6 parr.
Attis, Great Mother	I.21, 1–10	10 parr.
Osiris	I.21, 11–12, 14–15	4 parr.
Horus	I.21, 13	1 par.
Zodiac	I.21, 16–27	12 parr.
Nemesis	I.22, 1	1 par.
Pan	I.22, 2–7	6 parr.
Saturnus	I.22, 8	1 par.
Zeus	I.23, 1–22	22 parr.

<sup>19</sup> Mastandrea (1979, 176) did not define the extent of Labeo's contribution.

<sup>20</sup> In my opinion, Porphyry's work named *The Sun* mentioned by Servius (*Sol*: Serv. *ad Buc.* V.66 = fr. 477 Smith) can be identified with the Labeonian edition of Porphyry's work: as Mastandrea (1979, 175) pointed out, a typical source of his is quoted, namely the *libri pontificales*. On the work titled *Sun*, see fn. 39.

The ‘solar theology’ is homogeneous both in method and contents: it resorts to the etymology of divine names and epithets, to quotations of poetic and philosophical (mostly Stoic and Platonic) authorities, to allegorical interpretations of divine iconography and myths; Egyptian and oriental gods are also considered; occasionally, historical events<sup>21</sup> are mentioned too:

- *etymology of divine names and epithets*: Apollo (17, 7 [x3]; 8 [x2]; 9 [x2]; 14; 16 [x4]; 19; 22 [x2]; 31 [x3]; 32; 33; 34 [x2]; 35; 36 [x2]; 37; 39; 41; 42; 46 [x3]; 48 [x3]; 49; 50 [x2]; 56; 60; 64; 65 [x2]); Dionysus (18, 13 [x2]; 14; 15); Hermes (19, 9; 19, 13 [etym. of Argus]); Aesculapius’ snake (20, 3); Hercules (20, 10); Horus (21, 13); ram (21, 19); Pan (22, 3); Kronus (22, 8); [23, 3 (θεός, x2); 23, 7 (δαίμων, x3)];<sup>22</sup> Adad (23, 17);
- *poetic authorities (in abundantiam in the Apollinian section)*: *Apollo*: Euripides, Archilochus (17, 10); Homer (17, 12); Homer (17, 16); Timotheus (17, 20); Homer (17, 21); Homer (17, 22); Homer (17, 38, x2); Orpheus (17, 42); Homer (17, 44, x2); Euripides (17, 46); Euripides (17, 59); *Dionysus*: [Euripides (18, 4); Euripides, Aeschilus (18, 6)];<sup>23</sup> Orpheus (18, 12); Orpheus (18, 13); Aratus (18, 15); Orpheus (18, 17); Orpheus (18, 18); Orpheus (18, 22); *Ares*: Homer (19, 6); *Mercurius*: Homer (19, 9); Homer (20, 5); oracle (20, 17); *Pan*: Homer (22, 4); *Zeus*: [Homer (23, 1); Euripides (23, 8); Homer (23, 9)];<sup>24</sup> Orpheus (23, 22);
- *philosophical/learned authorities*: *Apollo*: Plato, Chrysippus (17, 7); Speusippus, Cleanthes, *alii* (17, 8); *Apollodorus* (17, 19); Leandrius, Pherecydes (17, 21); Oenopides, Cleanthes (17, 31); Antipater of Tarsus, Cleanthes (17, 36); Empedocles, Plato (17, 46); *physici* (17, 50); *physici* (17, 54); Antipater of Tarsus (17, 57); Numenius (17, 65); Porphyry (17, 70); *Dionysus*: [ps.Aristoteles’ θεολογούμενα (18, 1)];<sup>25</sup> Alexander (Myndius? 18, 11); Cleanthes (18, 14); *physici* (18, 15); *Aesculapius*: *Apollodorus* (20, 4); Hippocrates (20, 5); *Adonis*: *physici* (21, 1); *Zeus*: [Cleanthes, Posidonius, *physici* (23, 2); Plato (23, 5); Posidonius (23, 7)];<sup>26</sup> *theologi* (23, 21);

<sup>21</sup> The quotations from poets and philosophers, though not absent in other chapters, are more common in the Apollinian one (*Sat.* I.17). This is due to the fact that ΠΘ—where broad use of literature and Stoic influence are typical features—is used mostly in this chapter: see below.

<sup>22</sup> From a Latin addition (Cornificius).

<sup>23</sup> Probably from a Latin addition (from Labeo’s *De oraculo Apollinis Clarii?*): see 18, 1 *uti Clarium aqua pota* and below (18, 4), Varro’s and Granius’ quotations. On the Labeonian work, see Mastandrea 1979, 159–160.

<sup>24</sup> From a Latin addition (Cornificius).

<sup>25</sup> Probably from a Latin addition: see fn. 23.

<sup>26</sup> From a Latin addition (Cornificius).

- *allegorical interpretations of divine iconography*: Apollo (17, 12–13; 17, 67–69); Dionysus (18, 9; 18, 11; 18, 22); Ares (19, 2; 19, 5); Hermes (19, 8; 19, 10; 19, 14; 19, 16–17); Asclepius (20, 2); Isis, Serapis (20, 13); Aphrodite Aphacitis, Adonis (21, 5–6); Great Mother (21, 8); Attis (21, 9); Egyptian sun-god (21, 14); Pan (22, 4); Heliopolitan Zeus (23, 12); Adad (23, 19);
- *Egyptian and oriental cults*: Apollo: Lycopolis in Egypt (17, 40); Hierapolis (17, 66–70); Dionysus: [Thrace (18, 1)];<sup>27</sup> Egypt (18, 10); Thrace (18, 11); Ares: Accitania (19, 5); Hermes: *apud multas gentes* (19, 7); Egypt (19, 10); hieroglyphs (19, 13); caduceus according to Egyptians (19, 16); Egyptian gods who assist the birth (19, 17); Hercules: Tyre, Egypt (20, 7); Egypt (20, 11); Isis, Serapis: Egypt (20, 13–18); Adonis, Aphrodite Architis: Assyria, Phoenicia (21, 1–6); Attis, Great Mother: Phrygia (21, 7–9); Osiris: Egypt (21, 11–12 [hieroglyphs]); Horus: Egypt (21, 13); sun-god in Egypt (21, 14); Lybian Ammon and the ram (21, 19); bull cult in Egypt (21, 20); Zeus: Zeus Heliopolites in Assyria (23, 10–13); Assyrian Zeus-Adad (23, 17–20);
- *allegorical interpretation of myths*: Apollo: Apollo killing the snake Pytho (17, 50–59—two explanations); Hermes: Hermes killing Argus (19, 12–13); Hercules: gigantomachy (20, 8–9); Adonis: Persephone and Aphrodite's love for Adonis and his death (21, 1–4); Osiris: Isis and Osiris as the earth and the sun (21, 11);
- *historical events*: Apollo: Libyan invasion of Sicily (17, 24); Hercules: Theron king of Hispania (20, 12);

This strongly suggests that Macrobius—or Labeo—epitomised only one Greek work, since compilers, in order to facilitate their activity, would tend to use few sources, or even only one. Furthermore, in the 'solar theology' we find some internal references;<sup>28</sup> these were probably present in the source and preserved by its compilers, rather than added by them.

This Neoplatonic work is usually attributed to Porphyry, mentioned at I.17, 70.<sup>29</sup> The main and most likely argument supporting this view is that the identification of all gods with the sun is sustained through a philological approach: the

<sup>27</sup> From a Latin addition: see fn. 23.

<sup>28</sup> I.17, 17 (*ad* 17, 50ff.) and 17, 51 (*ad* 17, 17); 17, 68 (*ad* 19, 1–5); 19, 18 (*ad* 19, 10); 21, 11 (*ad* 21, 1–6, 21, 7–9); 22, 4 (*ad* 21, 9); 23, 20 (*ad* 21, 8).

<sup>29</sup> Wissowa 1880, 38 presumed that compilers of late antiquity, like Macrobius, would never mention their direct sources; this implied that Porphyry, cited by Macrobius, could not have been directly read by the latter. This rather mechanical argument is now superseded: see Reinhardt 1910, 103–104; Mastandrea 1979, 172.

‘proofs’ are drawn from historical cultures, perceived in their concrete cults, epithets or iconographies.<sup>30</sup>

To this I add a further argument, which is the use of ΠΘ itself.<sup>31</sup> The work seems to have accompanied Porphyry for a long time, starting from his youth: some quotations appear both in the early *Homeric Questions*<sup>32</sup> and in later works—albeit dating of the latter is very difficult.<sup>33</sup> I collect these works roughly under the heading of ‘allegorical works’: *On the Styx* (Περὶ Στυγός)<sup>34</sup>, *On the Images*.<sup>35</sup> To this group also belongs *The Cave of the Nymphs*, which has survived entirely, yet, unfortunately, does not seem to preserve material from ΠΘ.<sup>36</sup>

Tab. 4: *Quaestiones Homericæ*.

244 FGrHist 353	Sch. Hom. B*, E 422	deest in Schrader, MacPhail
244 FGrHist 354	Eust. ad Hom. A 206	deest in Schrader, MacPhail
244 FGrHist 355	Sch. Hom. B*, Θ 1	Schrader 1880, 112 = MacPhail 2011, 128
244 FGrHist 356	Eust. ad Hom. Σ 39	deest in Schrader, MacPhail
deest in FGrHist <sup>37</sup>	Sch. Hom. B*, B 447	Schrader 1880, 40 = MacPhail 2011, 58

**30** See Reinhardt 1910, 104; Altheim 1953, 21, 23; Flamant 1977, 662; Romano 1998, 125–126. On the parallelism between epithets and iconography in representing god’s unspeakable essence, see Chiaï 2016.

**31** See also Flamant 1977, 656.

**32** Both editions (Schrader 1880; MacPhail 2011) are unsatisfying for different reasons: Schrader’s is largely outdated, as it relies on an old and unacceptable *Quellenforschung* according to which (too) many Iliadic scholia (mostly exegetical) are considered Porphyrian. MacPhail collects and translates the *Questions* from the most important manuscripts, but omits some of them and does not consider other possible *testimonia*.

**33** Dating Porphyry’s works is a very difficult task: in the past, scholars more confidently traced relative chronologies and resolved internal inconsistencies in Porphyry’s works by assuming a development of his thought: see Smith 1987, 722–723; 745; Smith (1987, 745) underlines Porphyry’s ability in ‘compartmentalisation’, i.e. writing with different emphasis on specific themes, without apparent consistence.

**34** The fragmentary work is edited both by Smith 1993, 442–461 and Castelletti 2006; the latter offers also a learned commentary. On the Περὶ Στυγός, see also Smith 1987, 743, 746–747.

**35** Edition both in Smith 1993, 414–435, and Gabriele 2012 (very useful commentary).

**36** The work was widely commented on by Simonini 1986. A new edition with commentary is going to be published by Dorandi *et alii*. See also fn. 42.

**37** It was assigned to ΠΘ by Reinhardt 1910, 107–109.

**Tab. 5:** *On the Styx* (Περὶ Στυγός).

244 FGrHist 102a	fr. 4 Castelletti = 373 Smith
244 FGrHist 102b	fr. 5 Castelletti = 374 Smith
244 FGrHist 102c	fr. 2 Castelletti = 377 Smith
244 FGrHist 102d	fr. 3 Castelletti = 378 Smith

**Tab. 6:** *On the Images* (Περὶ ἀγαλμάτων: fr. 8 Gabriele = 359 Smith).

Hephaistos as the fire	244 FGrHist 353 (see Heracl. 26,11)
Plato's etymology of Apollo's name	244 FGrHist 95 (Macr. I.17,7)
Asclepius' snake	see Macr. I.20, 2–3 (ΠΘ quoted slightly later)
Cleanthes' etymology of Dionysos' name	Cleanthes is in ΠΘ 'bibliography'; see Macr. I.18, 14
Chrysippus' (SVF 910) and Diogenes of Babylon's (SVF 91) etymology of Athena's name	Chrysippus is in ΠΘ bibliography (above); Apollodorus was Diogenes' disciple
etymology of Ares' name	see Heracl. 31,1
Aphrodite as generation principle	244 FGrHist 353
Hermes as the λόγος	see Heracl. 72,4
Pan as the universe	244 FGrHist 126a

**Tab. 7:** *De Abstinencia*.

244 FGrHist 125	II.55
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I think that the Porphyrian work epitomised in the 'solar theology' is to be identified, as suggested by Reinhardt,<sup>38</sup> with the one-book treatise *On the Divine Names* (Περὶ θείων ὀνομάτων) attested by the *Suda* list of Porphyry's works.<sup>39</sup> The

<sup>38</sup> See Reinhardt 1910, 104–105.

<sup>39</sup> *Suda* s.v. Πορφύριος: ... περὶ θείων ὀνομάτων α' (p. 45 Smith). It is impossible not to compare the work *On the divine Names* with Porphyry's work entitled *Sun*, attested by Servius (see fn. 20). The title clearly derives from the undiscussed protagonist of the treatise; the presence of the Latin additions suggests that we are dealing with the Latin edition of Porphyry's work by C. Labeo, rather than with the Greek version. Servius correctly indicates the author as Porphyry, since the Latin edition was perceived as nothing more than a translation. The allegorical interpretations we read in Servius do not correspond perfectly to Macrobius (see Flamant 1977, 664–

fact that the treatise consists of one book only fits perfectly with the breadth of the ‘solar theology’: the latter, already rather long itself, may in effect have amounted to one book in its original length.

This identification is supported by strong similarities between the ‘solar theology’ and Porphyry’s *On the Images*: both works 1) use etymology and iconography in order to grasp the very nature of divinity; 2) aim—though in different degrees (below)—to identify the gods of paganism with the sun; 3) show a syncretistic approach including also Egyptian and oriental gods.

Finally, etymology permeates all the ‘solar theology’, in particular the first chapter, the Apollinian one: this is undoubtedly its most characteristic feature. What better title could be devised for the ‘solar theology’, so strongly committed to interpreting divine names and epithets, than *On the Divine Names*?

The titles are somewhat misleading. *On the Images*, as emphasised by the title, is devoted to iconography—although etymology is also present. In the case of the ‘solar theology’, if we accept its identification with *On the Divine Names*, we find the symmetrically opposite situation: etymology is more emphasized than iconography—which is in fact present—and the former’s supremacy is underlined by the title of the work. In sum, these titles illustrate only the main component of the corresponding work—*On the Images* iconography, *On the Divine Names* etymology—and conceal the similarity between the two works.

The pagan gods are indeed ‘solarised’ in different degree in the two works. In *On the Images* non-solar interpretations are present, and refer to several natural elements:

**Tab. 8:** Gods.

sun	fr. 358, 359	Pluton; Hephaestus, Apollo, Hercules, Aesculapius, Dionysus, Horus, Pluton, Serapis, Cerberus
moon	fr. 359	Dionysus
earth fruits	fr. 358	Dionysus, Cerberus, Attis, Adonis

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665), but this may derive from the fact that allegorical interpretations are subject to continuous rewriting. Scholars have interpreted in many ways the relations between the Neoplatonic bulk in Macrobius, the *Sun* and the title attested by *Suda*. Courcelle (1948, 20) identified *The Sun* with *On the Divine Names*; Altheim (1966, 204–205) argued that *On the Divine Names*, *On the Images* and *The Sun* were different works, and that the last one was the source of the ‘solar theology’. Flamant (1977, 667) also distinguished the three works, but argued that the ‘solar theology’ included material from all them. According to Mastandrea (1979, 174–175), *On the Divine Names* could be the source of the ‘solar theology’.



water	fr. 359	Oceanus; Achelous; Poseidon
time	fr. 359	Cronus; Curetes
fire	fr. 359	Ares
generation principle	frr. 358, 359	Priapus; Hermes
universe	fr. 359	Pan
world soul	fr. 354	Zeus

**Tab. 9:** Goddesses.

Moon	fr. 359	Artemis, Athena, Hecate, Ilithyiai, Moirai, Demeter, Kore
Earth	frr. 357, 358	Hestia, Rhea, Demeter; Themis
Earth fruits	frr. 357, 358	Kore; Kore
Water	fr. 359	Thetis
Air	frr. 355, 356	Hera; Hera, Leto
Love	fr. 359	Aphrodite

In the 'solar theology', divinities are mostly identified with the sun. Some solar gods included in the 'solar theology' are present, as such, also in *On the Images*:

**Tab. 10:** Gods which are solar in both treatises.

	<i>On the Images</i>	<i>On the Divine Names</i> <sup>40</sup>
Apollo	fr. 359	I.17
Hercules	fr. 359	I.20, 6–12
Aesculapius	fr. 359	I.20, 1–5
Dionysus	fr. 359	I.18, 1–24
Horus	fr. 359	I.21, 13
Serapis	fr. 359	I.20, 13–18

Gods who were not solar in *On the Images* are such in the 'solar theology'.

<sup>40</sup> Pluton, who was solar in *On the Images* (fr. 358), is absent in the 'solar theology': but see I.19, 10.

**Tab. 11:** Gods which become solar in the ‘solar theology’.

	<i>On the Images</i>	<i>On the Divine Names</i>
Zeus	fr. 354	I.23, 1–22
Ares	fr. 359	I.19, 1–6
Cronus	fr. 359	I.22, 8
Hermes	fr. 359	I.19, 7–18
Pan	fr. 359	I.22, 2–7

Other gods who were not solar in *On the Images* are neglected, probably because they could not be easily ‘solarised’: among others, Oceanus, Achelous and Poseidon (fr. 359).

The female divinities are an interesting case. In *On the Images*, they represent several natural elements (above); in the ‘solar theology’ they are by far less present, being only mentioned in chapters dedicated to their male counterparts: this is the case of Isis with Serapis (I.20, 13–18) and with Osiris (I.21, 11–12), and of the Great Mother with Attis (I.21, 1–10). They are usually not considered solar:

**Tab. 12:** Non-solar goddesses in the ‘solar theology’.

Sun power	I.17, 69 (Minerva: <i>virtus solis</i> [Porph.]); 22, 1 (Nemesis: <i>solis potestas</i> ); 23, 24 (Virgo: ἡλιακή δύναμις)
Earth	I.17, 54 (Latona); 19, 13 (Io); 20, 18 (Isis); 21, 1 (Aphrodite, Proserpina); 21, 8 (Mother of the gods); 21, 11 (Isis); 23, 8 (Hestia); 23, 18 (Adargatis)
Moon	I.17, 11 (Diana); 17, 53 (Diana); 19, 17 (Τύχη); 20, 1 (Salus)
Air	I.17, 54 (Hera)
Celestial harmony	I.22, 7 (Echo)
Matter	see I.17, 69
Nature	I.17, 69; 20, 18 (Isis); 21, 11 (Isis)
Providence	I.17, 55 (Athena πρόνοια)

In this respect, the first entry should be deemed an exception, as δύναμις or *virtus* is none other than the power of the male god. As for the other goddesses, we can observe philosophical identifications with matter (ὕλη), nature (*rerum natura*) or providence (πρόνοια). A number of other goddesses are identified with natural elements, namely earth, moon or air—like in *On the Images*—, which draws a significant line of continuity between the two works.

Thus, both works consider the same—or very similar—material while arriving at slightly different conclusions. This indicates that they could belong to different stages in the philosophical thinking of Porphyry, who may have repeatedly meditated on the essence of the divine. Which work was written earlier? I find it very unlikely that the philosopher passed from a predominantly solar interpretation to the mostly traditional ones in *On the Images*. On the contrary, the presence of these traditional interpretations suggests that Porphyry progressively gave the sun a more and more prominent role, for he intended to find a convincing model of the divine—and found it in the quasi-monotheistic and authoritative model of the sun god, so dear to some emperors.<sup>41</sup> Accordingly, *On the Images* should be dated before the ‘solar theology’/ *On the Divine Names*. The fact that Plotinus is mentioned in the proem of *On the Divine Names* allows us to date it after 263 CE—the year Porphyry met his teacher for the first time. It is uncertain whether *On the Images*, which precedes *On the Divine Names*, should be dated before or after Porphyry’s meeting with Plotinus.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> About the cult of the sun in imperial times, see fn. 6. On monotheistic tendencies in late antiquity, see Athanassiadi-Frede 1999; Mitchell/Van Nuffelen 2010.

<sup>42</sup> Significantly, Mithras, who is also considered a solar god (see Clauss 1012, 29ff.; Berrens 2004, 24ff.; Wallraff 2001, 30ff.), is mentioned, along with information about Persian religion, throughout *The Cave of the Nymphs* (chapters 6, 15, 17, 20, 24) and in the treatise *On Abstinence* (4.16). Porphyry’s sources on Mithras and Persian religion are the otherwise unknown authors Eubulos (cited in *The Cave* 6 and *On Abstinence* 4.16) and Pallas (*On Abst.* 2.56 and 4.16). Yet, Mithras is absent in *On the Images* and above all in the ‘solar theology’, where he may be expected to appear instead. This could be explained by the fact that, when composing the ‘solar theology’, Porphyry had not yet in his hands Eubulos’ and Pallas’ works about the god. In effect, since *On Abstinence* is dedicated to Plotinus’ friend Castricius, it belongs to the period after 263 CE (see Smith 1987, 721). The date of *The Cave* is uncertain, but scholars tend to date it to the Plotinian period—although by that time Porphyry had not yet completely assimilated Plotinus’ philosophy: see Simonini 1986, 31 with bibliography; *aliter* Turkan 1975, 64. Accordingly, the following relative chronology among all these Porphyrian works can be derived: *On the Images* (uncertain whether before or after 263)—*On the Divine Names* (after 263)—the first encounter with Eubulos’ and Pallas’ works (date uncertain)—*The Cave* and *On Abstinence* (where Eubulos and Pallas are mentioned). The fact that Eubulos and Pallas arrive to Porphyry through the philosophers Numenius and Cronius (see Seele 1949, 241, 4–9; Turkan 1975, 41–42)—which is likely, since they are the most important source (or the source) of *The Cave*—is not a real problem: chronologically, it is indeed not the direct reading of Eubulos and Pallas, but rather of Numenius and Cronius that occurs between *On the Divine Names* and *The Cave*. The latter were read and commented on in the school of Plotinus (see *Vita Plotini* 14): this is consistent with the chronology indicated above. Turkan suggests a different chronology: see Turkan 1975, 64.

## 1.2 Apollodorus' ΠΘ in the 'solar theology' / *On the Divine Names*

So much for the structure, contents and methodology of the work epitomised by Macrobius—or, possibly, already by Labeo. From this work of complex history and, so to speak, stratigraphy, how can we then recover the traces of ΠΘ?<sup>43</sup>

Firstly, we can compare Macrobius-Porphiry with other witnesses of Apollodorus' work, some considered in the present essay: Strabo, the Homeric lexicon by Apollonius the Sophist, the allegorical manual by Cornutus (to be used with caution), the *Homeric Allegories* by Heraclitus (1st–2nd centuries CE?), the exegetical scholia on the *Iliad*, the so-called *Mythographus Homericus* (MH).<sup>44</sup>

Then we can take into account Apollodorus' sources and methodology, which was of Aristarchan origin. According to Apollodorus, Homer—and not later authors (the so-called νεώτεροι)—was the first and most important witness of divine nature; Apollodorus favoured an internal approach to explaining Homer—according to the well-known adage 'explaining Homer through Homer'.<sup>45</sup> Other typical features are the presence of Aristarchan terminology, of literary quotations—though secondary with respect to Homer—,<sup>46</sup> the use of local/antiquarian writers, and the mention of Athens and its cults.<sup>47</sup>

Although we can retrieve much material from ΠΘ, there is no way we can reconstruct its framework of origin, due to the several mediations occurring in between.<sup>48</sup> Porphiry, who read ΠΘ directly, probably excerpted the most interesting

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**43** It is not by chance that, in his edition of Apollodorus' fragments in *FGrHist*, Jacoby inserted most of the Apollinian chapter from the 'solar theology' in small-sized font. He indeed published in similar fashion another part of ΠΘ mediated by Porphiry—in this case through the latter's Περὶ Στυγός, 244 *FGrHist* 102abcd.

**44** The typical features—and problems—of each author will be described when encountered below. About Apollodorus, see p. 229.

**45** See Schironi 2018, 737; Schironi 2012, 436–437; Nünlist 2011, 108. See also fn. 78.

**46** Apollodorus' relationship with the νεώτεροι is a complex one: they are reported when they do not differ from the Poet; sometimes, they are used to integrate Homer if the latter is in some parts incomplete. They are also quoted when they differ from him, in order to be criticised. This reveals Apollodorus' systematic approach in reporting sources and bibliography, which made him precious in the eyes of later compilers. See Filoni 2004, 543–544.

**47** In ca 60 fragments of the work, a third refers to Attic cults or antiquities: 244 *FGrHist* 94, 95 (Macr. *Sat.* I.17, 18; 21), 101, 105, 107a, 108, 110b, 112, 113, 115, 120, 127, 133, 137, 143, 144, 145, 147, 152. Cf. also § 1.3.

**48** See Jacoby 1926, 761.

information from the Apollinian books (the 13th and 14th);<sup>49</sup> we are, however, far from certain that he followed the original sequence. We must therefore rest content with individual Apollodorean interpretations of divine epithets, some points of his argumentation, his sources and his 'bibliography'.

### 1.3 The stratigraphy within the 'solar theology': the case of Apollo πατῶος

The complex stratigraphy of the 'solar theology' can be observed in the brief treatment of the epithet πατῶος (244 *FGrHist* 95 = Macr. *Sat.* I.17, 42):<sup>50</sup>

*Apollinem Πατῶον cognominaverunt non propria gentis unius aut civitatis religione, sed ut auctorem prognerandarum omnium rerum, quod sol umoribus exsiccatis ad prognerandum omnibus praeuit causam, ut ait Orpheus (fr. 242 Kern) πατὴρ ἔχοντα νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλὴν. Unde nos quoque Ianum patrem vocamus, solem sub hac appellatione venerantes.*

They named Apollo *patrōios* ('ancestral'), not because of a belief specific to a single nation or community, but as the source of generation for all things, because the sun dried up moisture and so began the general process of propagation, "having", as Orpheus (*PEGr* fr. 544) says, "a father's good sense and shrewd counsel". For that reason we call Janus father, worshipping the sun under that form of address. (Kaster)

Firstly, an interpretation is rejected: Apollo is not termed πατῶος "because of the cult of a people or a community" (*non propria gentis unius aut civitatis religione*); he, as the sun, by drying the damp, allows all things to be generated (*ad prognerandum omnibus praeuit causam*). Orpheus (fr. 242 Kern) attests that the god "has a paternal mind and careful will" (πατὴρ ἔχοντα νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλὴν). The Latin addition follows: "we too call Ianus 'father' (*nos quoque Ianum patrem vocamus*) since we venerate the sun with this very name" (*solem sub hac appellatione venerantes*). The Roman Ianus, perceived as a solar god, with his epithet *pater* offers a good parallel to Orpheus.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> 244 *FGrHist* 95 (*Sat.* I.17, 19: Apollodorus in book XIII Περὶ θεῶν) and 97 (*Sch. Hom.* Ge, Φ 448: Ἀπολλόδωρος ἐν II'). The discrepancy between Macrobius and the Genevan scholium is not a real problem: more books could certainly be dedicated to an important divinity like Apollo. Accordingly, Apollo was likely discussed in the first books of the second half of ΠΘ's 24 books (sc. 13th and 14th), while Zeus, to whom the first book is dedicated (244 *FGrHist* 88), opened the first half of the work.

<sup>50</sup> On the epithet, see Burkert 2003, 465; Syska 1993, 156–157, with bibliography; Nilsson 1967, 556–557.

<sup>51</sup> On the epithets of Ianus, see also *Sat.* I.9, 15.

If we exclude the Latin addition, two interpretations are juxtaposed: one that is cult-related, and one that is solar in nature. The latter may be Porphyry's: Orpheus, who attests the paternal disposition of the creator god, is one of his most beloved *auctores*.<sup>52</sup> Differently, the former interpretation seems to be of a local nature. Several elements point towards Athens: the cult of Apollo πατρῷος is typical of the city, where he is venerated as patron of the phratries that gather during the *Apaturia*; and then Apollo πατρῷος, being the father of the Athenian hero Ion, is father to all Ionians—Athens claimed to be a metropolis to all them.<sup>53</sup> If we consider that Apollodorus, who seems very proud of his Athenian origin, very often mentions Attic cults in ΠΘ,<sup>54</sup> the grammarian could be the *auctor* of this interpretation. Porphyry may have refused it both because he was more interested in assigning a solar dimension to Apollo's epithets (§ 3), and because he may have been shocked to find that a universal god like Apollo was to be reduced to such a parochial dimension.

If this reconstruction is correct, three different layers are at play here: Apollodorus and his cult-related (or 'Athenian') explanation; Porphyry with his solar interpretation; the Latin addition—given the identification of Apollo πατρῷος with Ianus *pater*. It is worth noting that *Apollodorus did not interpret the epithet as solar*.<sup>55</sup>

## 2 Apollo's epithets under investigation

### 2.1 Νόμιος

As we shall see below, Apollodorus interpreted this Apollinian epithet in the way most common at that time, i.e. in a pastoral sense.<sup>56</sup> The originality of his contribution lies in the fact that he connected the pastoral and the medical aspects of

<sup>52</sup> The mythical prophet is mentioned throughout the 'solar theology' (above, under 'poetic authorities'); for references occurring outside the 'solar theology', see 354 Smith (= fr. 3 Gabriele, *περὶ ἀγαμάτων*); *De antro* 7 (τῶν θεολόγων, cf. Simonini 1986 *ad loc.*); 14; 16.

<sup>53</sup> See bibliography quoted in fn. 50.

<sup>54</sup> See fn. 47.

<sup>55</sup> According to this reconstruction, if we consider the possibility of a 'Latin edition' of the Porphyrian work by C. Labeo (§ 1.1), the opposition between Porphyry and Cornelius Labeo about this epithet, as argued by Syska (1993, 245–246), becomes untenable.

<sup>56</sup> With respect to the pastoral nature of the epithet, modern scholars and ancient interpretations agree: see Eustathius in *Il.* I.59, 26–28; IV 535, 3ff. Van der Valk; Clem. Alex. *Protrep.* II.26, 3; about Call. *Hymn.* IV.47–49, see fn. 73. See Graf 2009, 123; Syska 1993, 157 [with bibliography];

the god. Following Homer, who in the *Iliad* attested that the plague hit animals at first, Apollodorus thought that the god was termed νόμιος because he protected the herds and, by protecting them, prevented contagion to human beings. His view is clearly presented in the *Mythographus Homericus*; Cornutus modifies it by eliminating the relation with the plague; Porphyry—i.e. the 'solar theology'—goes further, interpreting this epithet too as solar.

### 2.1.1

The so-called *Mythographus Homericus* (henceforth *MH*), a grammarian of the 1st–2nd centuries CE, produced a mythographic commentary on Homer, consisting of mythical accounts (ιστορίαι), which has been transmitted through papyri and D scholia to Homer. These notes end with a subscription, which attributes the mythographic commentary to a learned source.<sup>57</sup> *MH* must be used with caution: he may have not directly read some of the *auctores* cited in the subscriptions—among whom is Apollodorus;<sup>58</sup> contamination with other sources is also to be taken into account; all of this implies that these subscriptions are not always reliable.<sup>59</sup>

Bearing this in mind, we can now read *MH*'s explanation of Apollo's epithet νόμιος attributed to Apollodorus (*Sch. Hom. D*, Φ 448 Van Thiel = ad 244 *FGrHist* 99):<sup>60</sup>

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Nilsson 1967, 536. Exceptions are the scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius who derives the epithet from νόμος 'law' (*Sch. Ap. Rh.* IV.1217–9e Wendel) and a solar interpretation in Eustathius (IV.535, 7–8 Van der Valk).

<sup>57</sup> See Van der Valk 1963, 303–311; Montanari 1995, 135–137; Van Rossum-Steenbeck 1998, 85–92, 116–118, who consider *MH* a real author; Montanari 1995, 165 seems to think it is the work of several anonymous compilers (but see 168).

<sup>58</sup> *MH* quotes both his *Commentary on the Catalogue of Ships* and ΠΘ: see *Sch. Hom. D*, N 12, N 301 Van Thiel (244 *FGrHist* 178a and 179 respectively); *Sch. Hom. V*, ψ 198 Ernst (244 *FGrHist* 129). These quotations must be markedly distinguished from those of ps.Apollodorus' *Library*, very frequent in *MH*: about the latter, see Van Rossum-Steenbeck 1998, 108–111.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Van der Valk 1963, 342–367; Montanari 1995, 165–166; Van Rossum-Steenbeck 1998, 111–113. An extremely correct and balanced view is presented in Van Rossum-Steenbeck 1998, 115: "sometimes the source that was fortunate enough to be mentioned in the subscription may indeed have been the main source for the version of the story related; at other times, it might have been one of the sources that was originally mentioned..."

<sup>60</sup> A papyrus edited by M. Haslam (*P.Oxy.* 4096 = pap. 53 Van Rossum-Steenbeck) preserves this ιστορία, but in a very fragmentary condition (*P.Oxy.* 4096 fr. 5+6 [20–22]; pap. 53 Van Rossum-

φασίν τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα κεκληῖσθαι νόμιον διὰ τὴν τοιαύτην αἰτίαν· οἱ παλαιοὶ τοὺς λοιμοὺς ἐξ Ἀπόλλωνος ἐνόμιζον, πᾶς δὲ λοιμὸς ἀπὸ τῶν ἀλόγων ἀρχεται, ὥς καὶ Ὅμηρός φησιν· “οὐρήας μὲν πρῶτον ἐπώχετο κῆλα θεοῖο” (A 50). βουλόμενοι οὖν τὸν θεὸν δυσωπεῖν ἵνα τοὺς λοιμοὺς ἀποτρέπη νόμιον καὶ φύλακα τῶν βοσκημάτων ἐκάλεσαν, ὅθεν Ὅμηρον εἰπεῖν ὡς ἐβουκόλησεν παρὰ Λαομέδοντι (sc. Φ 448–449) καὶ Ἀδμήτῳ ἵπποφορβήσεν (sc. B 766). οὕτως ἱστορεῖ Ἀπολλόδωρος.

They say that Apollo was called *nomios* because of this motive: ancient people held that the plague derived from Apollo, and that each plague begins from the beasts, as Homer (*Il.* 1.50) says: “the god’s arrows stroke the mules at first”. Accordingly, appeasing the god, in order to avert the plagues, they called him *nomios* and guardian of the animals; therefore Homer said that he tended Laomedon’s cattle (*Il.* 21.448) and Admetus’ mares (*Il.* 2.766–767). So Apollodorus relates. (my translation)

The grammarian is explicitly cited in the subscription (οὕτως ἱστορεῖ Ἀπολλόδωρος). According to him, Apollo was termed νόμιος because in ancient times humankind thought that diseases, caused by the god, originated from animals (οἱ παλαιοὶ τοὺς λοιμοὺς ἐξ Ἀπόλλωνος ἐνόμιζον, πᾶς δὲ λοιμὸς ἀπὸ τῶν ἀλόγων ἀρχεται). Homer attests this very point: “the god’s arrows stroke the mules at first” (A 50): it is the beginning of the well-known plague in the first book of the *Iliad*. In order to appease the god, people called him νόμιος and guardian of the herds (βουλόμενοι οὖν τὸν θεὸν δυσωπεῖν ἵνα τοὺς λοιμοὺς ἀποτρέπη νόμιον καὶ φύλακα τῶν βοσκημάτων ἐκάλεσαν). Hence Homer, cited again, said that Apollo nurtured herds for Laomedon<sup>61</sup> and mares for Admetus.<sup>62</sup>

*MH*’s account can be articulated in the following points—not necessarily in the sequence of the text:

1. Apollo is called νόμιος;
2. he is the god of plague;
3. plague originates from animals (Hom. A 50);
4. Apollo is venerated in order to protect animals;
5. by doing this, he will protect also human beings;
6. he nurtures animals (Hom. B 766–767; Φ 448);

First of all, we see how two different functions of Apollo are here joined, namely the pastoral and that of defender of human health. This is due to the fact that the human plague originates from animals; as long as the god protects them, he will

Steenbeck fr. 5+6+52 [287–99]). According to Van Rossum-Steenbeck 1998, 287, the name of the grammarian is mentioned in the papyrus (fr. 5, I.4).

<sup>61</sup> Hom. Φ 448: Φοῖβε, σὺ δ’ εἰλίποδας ἔλικας βοῦς βουκολέεσκες.

<sup>62</sup> Hom. B 776: τὰς ἐν Πηρείῃ θρέψ’ ἀργυρότοξος Ἀπόλλων.



also prevent evil to humankind. Secondly, there stands out the importance of Homer who corroborates two main points at least: his pastoral activities (Φ 448; B 766) and the connection between the two aspects of the god (A 50: the mules as first victims). The Poet may also have been the source attesting that Apollo is *per se* the god of plagues, as widely shown in the first book of the *Iliad*.

Thus, *MH* preserves a largely consistent account; Homer is the source that warrants at least two—or three—logical points underlying this account. Given Apollodorus' typical reliance on Homer, the whole account likely derives from ΠΘ;<sup>63</sup> accordingly, the final subscription can be considered correct.<sup>64</sup>

### 2.1.2

The exegetical scholia on the *Iliad* often report similar information to that of *MH*: they probably share the same source.<sup>65</sup> In this case, they do not mention Apollodorus but their content is very similar to that of *MH*: this means that their common source must have read ΠΘ and drawn information from it. Though scantier if compared to *MH*, the exegetical scholia nonetheless confirm the latter on the whole.

We read these scholia in two (slightly) different versions, that of T (codex Townleyanus) and the one of the b-family (*Sch. Hom.* Φ 448a1–2 Erbse):

**Tab. 13:** Exegetical scholia on *Iliad* Φ 448.

	<i>Sch. Hom. T, Φ 448a1</i>	<i>Sch. Hom. b, Φ 448a2</i>
1	νόμιος γὰρ ὁ θεός.	ὁ δὲ Ἀπόλλων νόμιος ὡς ἐπὶ πλεῖστον καὶ τῶν θρεμμάτων αὐξητικός.
2	οἱ δὲ ἐπεὶ αἱ ἀρχαὶ τῶν λοιμῶν ἀπὸ τῶν τετραπόδων ἄρχονται,	φασὶ δὲ ὡς ἐπεὶ ἀρχὴν ὡς ἐπὶ πᾶν ὁ λοιμὸς ἀπὸ τετραπόδων λαμβάνει,
3	αὐτοῖς ἐπέστησαν αὐτόν, ὅπως ἀναβαλλόμενος τούτων ἄπτεσθαι πολὺ μᾶλλον τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀπέχεται.	αὐτοῖς αὐτὸν ἐπέστησαν, ὅπως ἀναβαλλόμενος ἄπτεσθαι αὐτῶν ἔσται καὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις σωτήρ.

<sup>63</sup> Perhaps indirectly: § 2.1.2.

<sup>64</sup> Unfortunately, *MH* was quoted by Jacoby (1926, 1049 [ad fr. 99]; 1057) only in apparatus and not included into the text.

<sup>65</sup> Perhaps a Homeric commentator: see Van der Valk 1963, 317–318.

	<i>Sch. Hom. T, Φ 448a1</i>	<i>Sch. Hom. b, Φ 448a2</i>
1	for the god is <i>nomios</i> ;	for the god is <i>nomios</i> , since he lets the animal grow a great deal.
2	since the plagues begin from the beasts,	They say that, because the plague mostly begins from the beasts,
3	they assigned him (Apollo) to them (the beasts), in order that (the god), postponing to affect the animals, will abstain from men. (my translation)	they assigned him (Apollo) to them (the beasts), in order that, postponing to affect the animals, will be saviour also for the men. (my translation)

Apollo is called νόμιος because he breeds cattle (point 1: τῶν θρεμμάτων αὐξητικός). Then we are told that the plague usually originates from quadrupeds (point 2); for this reason, Apollo was assigned to their protection: by preserving the animals, the god will also preserve humankind (point 3). The argumentation is very similar to that presented in *MH*, both in content and in sequence: Apollo is called νόμιος (= *MH* 1); the plague originates from the animals (= *MH* 3); the god, by protecting them, can prevent the spreading of human plague (= *MH* 5); the god breeds animals (~ *MH* 6). The elements that go unmentioned—Apollo as the plague god, and as venerated by humankind—are easily understandable. The slightly different sequence of information (point 2 of *sch.ex.* vs. *MH* 6) is not surprising in scholiastic literature as it was subject to continuous rewriting. The latter phenomenon could also explain the absence of Homeric quotations, as they are easily eliminated in the shortening of the scholia.

## 2.1.3

The Genevan scholium on the same passage of the *Iliad* reports the *ipsissima verba* of Apollodorus from the 13<sup>th</sup> book of ΠΘ (*Sch. Hom. Ge, Φ 446–449* Erbse = 244 *FGrHist* 96):

Ἀπολλόδωρός φησιν ἐν <Ι>Γ περὶ θεῶν· “ἐφόσον γὰρ τῷ Ποσειδῶνι προσήκειν ἡγεῖτο (sc. Ὅμηρος) τὰ κατὰ τὴν τειχοδομίαν, ὃν ἡμεῖς ἀσφάλιον καὶ θεμελιοῦχον, αὐτὸς δὲ (sc. Ὅμηρος) ἐνοσίχθονα καὶ γαιήοχον καλεῖν εἴωθεν, ἐπὶ τοσούτον καὶ <τὰ> κατὰ τὰς νομάς τῷ νομίῳ Ἀπόλλωνι”. διὸ καὶ περὶ τῶν Εὐμήλου πεποίηκεν ἵππων· “τὰς ἐν Φηρείῃ θρέψ’ ἀργυρότοξος Ἀπόλλων, ἄμφω θηλείας, φόβον Ἄρῃος φορεούσας” (B 766–767).

Apollodorus states in the 13th (book) *On the Gods*: “How far (Homer) held that the art of building belong to Poseidon, whom we call *asphalios* and *themeliouchos*, Homer used to call *enosichthōn* (‘shaker of the earth’) and *gaiēochos* (‘lord of the earth’), how much (Homer held that) the protection of the pasturages (belong to) Apollo”. Accordingly, he sang about

Eumelus' mares (*Il.* 2.766–767) “the ones that Apollo of the silver bow nurtured in Pherie, both of them mares, bearing with them the terror of Ares”. (my translation)

Apollo and Poseidon are compared: “As (Homer) thought that wall-construction (τὰ κατὰ τὴν τειχοδομίαν) was in the sphere of Poseidon (τῷ Ποσειδῶνι προσήκειν), whom we call ἀσφάλιος and θεμελιοῦχος (respectively, ‘he who enforces’ and ‘he who beholds the ground’) and Homer usually calls ἐνοσίχθων and γαιήοχος (i.e. ‘he who shakes the soil’ and ‘he who possesses the earth’), similarly (ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον) (Homer believed that) the protection of pastures (<τὰ> κατὰ τὰς νομάς) (was in the sphere) of Apollo νόμιος (τῷ νομίῳ Ἀπόλλωνι [*sc.* προσήκειν]). Therefore Homer narrates about Eumelus’ mares (*B* 766–767).”

Unfortunately, the scholium does not record Apollodorus’ exact interpretation of νόμιος; we can, however, deduce it from the comparison with Poseidon. Two fundamental aspects of the latter are documented: he is a town-builder and, at the same time, a shaker of the soil and destroyer, as it is conveyed by the Homeric epithets (αὐτὸς δὲ ἐνοσίχθονα καὶ γαιήοχον καλεῖν εἴωθεν) and those of recent times (ὃν ἡμεῖς ἀσφάλιον καὶ θεμελιοῦχον [*sc.* καλεῖν εἰώθαμεν]). Accordingly, all these epithets attest that the god has two opposite sides. The comparison suggests that the grammarian had the same opinion about Apollo νόμιος. In what sense? As found in *MH*, Apollo is the god of plague but, as the protector of the animals from which it originates, he is able to prevent its spreading to animals as also to humankind; in sum, the god of plague can prevent the plague itself.<sup>66</sup> The protection of Eumelus’ mares by the god, attested by Homer (*B* 766–767), is mentioned also by *MH*; the precious literal quotation in the Ge-scholium confirms the god’s ambiguity as reconstructed above.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>66</sup> See Filoni 2018, 474–479. Accordingly, Van der Valk’s view is to be rejected, according to which “Apollodorus may have offered different explanations of the epithets (*sc.* those of *MH* and Ge-scholium)”: see Van der Valk 1963, 308 fn. 22.

<sup>67</sup> The comparison with Poseidon ἀσφάλιος/ἀσφαλίων and ἐνοσίχθων—and with Hermes—emerges also in another context, commenting on Apollo’s epithet οὔλιος; again enhancing the god’s ambiguity (*Sat.* I.17, 22). The theme, along with some epithets of these gods, recurs in *P.Oxy.* 1218 (= *TGF* 721 II.301ff.), a commentary on an uncertain tragedy perhaps of Trojan topic (fr. 2a II.14–16): Ποσειδῶνος λέγεται καὶ θεμελιοῦχος ... | οἳ τε σεισμοὶ τοῦτω προσάπτονται ... ὁ δὲ Ἀπόλλων νόμιος). On the papyrus, see Lobel (1971, 43 [ad II. 12ff.]); Kannicht/Snell 1981, 301; Rusten 1982, 48–53. In my opinion, Rusten assigns ΠΘ too extended presence in the papyrus he comments upon: ΠΘ ends up being a mythographic rather than a theological work; accordingly, I would sustain that only the above-mentioned part is drawn from ΠΘ.

## 2.1.4

Among the witnesses of ΠΘ, after the ‘solar theology’, Cornutus poses the hardest difficulties when tracing the material that he draws from his source, since he markedly distorts it.<sup>68</sup> However, the task can become less hard if other *testimonia* help us to reconstruct what Apollodorus may have written. We read (69, 5–9 Torres):<sup>69</sup>

ἐπεὶ δ' ἐν τοῖς λοιμοῖς ὡς ἐπὶ πᾶσι δοκεῖ τὰ θρέμματα πημαίνεσθαι πρῶτον καὶ συνεχέστερον  
<ἢ> καθ' αὐτὰ φθεῖρεσθαι λοιμικῶς, κατὰ τοῦτο καὶ τὴν τῶν ποιμνίων ἐπιμέλειαν  
ἀνέθηκεν αὐτῷ, νόμιον καὶ λύκιον καὶ λυκοκτόνον προσαγορεύοντες.

Since during the plagues the animals seem mostly to be damaged at first, and they die because of the plague more frequently than because of internal causes, therefore they attributed to him the care of the flocks, calling him *nomios* ‘pastoral’, *lykios* ‘of the wolf’ and *lykoktonos* ‘wolf-killer’. (my translation)

The Stoic says that during the plague the animals seem to be the first to be harmed; the number of deaths due to the plague (λοιμικῶς) is higher than those due to internal causes (<ἢ> καθ' αὐτά). Therefore humankind entrusted also the protection of flocks to Apollo, calling him νόμιος, λύκιος and λυκοκτόνος.

In some important points Cornutus agrees with what we reconstructed above: that the plague begins in animals (θρέμματα); that humankind entrusted their protection to the god; and that for this reason Apollo is termed νόμιος. The sequence seems to correspond to that of *MH*; this is important, as it suggests that the core of these Cornutean lines is drawn from ΠΘ.

At the same time, strong differences emerge, however: other epithets, λύκιος and λυκοκτόνος, are cited (about these, § 2.2.5), while Homeric quotations, including the key one, namely that which attests the spreading of the disease from animals to humans, are completely absent. For Cornutus seems to have in mind *the animal plague only*, not the human: the former is dealt with at the end of the Apollinian chapter (sc. the passage we read, 69, 5–9), the latter at its very beginning (65, 11–66,8). We can only deduce that, according to the philosopher, human and animal plagues are both related to Apollo, but not to each other. By neglecting Homeric quotations, in particular A 50, Cornutus rejected this precise

<sup>68</sup> See Reinhardt 1910, 118; Nock 1931, 1002, 33–35. Cornutus was indicated as a witness of ΠΘ firstly by Münzel 1883, 25–30, and often mentioned by Hefermehl 1905 and Reinhardt 1910; Schmidt 1912 is devoted to Cornutus alone. *Quellenforschung* in Cornutus’ manual is nowadays mostly neglected: see Most 1989, 2016. But see now Filoni 2018.

<sup>69</sup> I record the expunctions by the editor, but I do not follow them.

point, i.e. the connection between animal and human plagues. Accordingly, νόμιος was limited to the animal sphere, exactly as it was before Apollodorus. These differences with respect to Apollodorus do not mean that Cornutus did not consult him; rather, that Cornutus, *suo more*, reinterpreted him. In particular, the Stoic does not seem as close to the Homeric legacy as the grammarian.

### 2.1.5

Macrobius, i.e. Porphyry, pronounces Apollo νόμιος via an interesting argumentation (Macr. *Sat.* I.17, 43–45 = 244 *FGrHist* 95):

43. Νόμιον Ἀπόλλωνα *cognominaverunt non ex officio pastorali et fabula, per quam fingitur Admeti regis pecora pavisse, sed quia sol pascit omnia quae terra progenerat.*

They gave Apollo the surname *nomios*, not from his service as a shepherd—according to the story in which he pastured king's Admetus' flocks—but because the sun provides sustenance for all the things the earth generates. (transl. Kaster)

The pastoral side of the god is mentioned, yet only in order to be rejected. Apollo was termed νόμιος neither because of his pastoral duties (*ex officio pastorali*) nor due to the myth according to which he nourished Admetus' flocks (*ex ... fabula, per quam fingitur Admeti regis pecora pavisse*); rather, it was because the sun nurtures all the beings that the earth generates (*quia sol pascit omnia quae terra progenerat*).

It is not difficult here to see a reference to B 766–767, which supported a part of Apollodorus' argumentation; in Macrobius it is rejected because of its mythical—i.e. unreliable—nature (*fabula*). At the same time, the god's pastoral activity does not seem to be entirely overshadowed: the sun *nurtures* all creatures (*sol pascit omnia quae etc.*) exactly like a shepherd does his flocks. Also, Apollo's pastoral side is still present, yet perceived allegorically since Porphyry has 'solarised' the epithet, as with many others in the 'solar theology'. Comparison with other *testimonia* proves that: 1) Apollodorus did not interpret this epithet as solar; 2) though interpreting νόμιος differently from Apollodorus, Porphyry confirms the former's main interpretation of the epithet (*officio pastorali*) and the Homeric passages the grammarian based upon (B 766–767).

44. unde non unius generis sed omnium pecorum pastor canitur, ut apud Homerum (Φ 448) Neptuno dicente Φοῖβε, σὺ δ' εἰλιποδὰς ἔλικας βοῦς βουκολέεσκες. Atque idem apud eundem poetam equarum pastor significatur, ut ait (B 766–767) τὰς ἐν Φηρείῃ θρέψ' ἀργυρότοξος Ἀπόλλων, ἄμφω θηλείας, φόβον Ἄρης φορεούσας.

That's why he is celebrated as the shepherd, not of a single kind of flock, but of all flocks, as Neptune says in Homer (*Il.* 21.448) "Phoebus, you were herding the cattle with their twisted horns and shambling gait"; and the same Poet represents him as pasturing mares, saying (*Il.* 2.766–767) "the ones that Apollo of the silver bow nurtured in Pherie, both of them mares, bearing with them the terror of Ares". (transl. Kaster)

We are here told that "therefore Apollo is sung as shepherd not of one species alone, but of all animals" (*unde non unius generis sed omnium pecorum pastor canitur*). This was inferred from the Homeric passages mentioned above, according to which he nurtured mares and cattle. It is to be noted that the myth mentioned in B 766–767, which was criticised as *fabula*, is now useful: together with Φ 448, it 'demonstrates' that Apollo, as the sun, nourishes all animals (43: *quia sol pascit omnia quae terra progenerat*). Clearly, the allegorical perception of the god does continue as, literally, the passages attest the pastoral side of the god, not the solar one.<sup>70</sup> In Porphyry's eyes, these passages also convey a universal dimension (*sol pascit omnia*) which we do not find in Apollodorus. This universal dimension cannot be separated from the solar nature of the god and likely was engendered by the latter.

45. *Praeterea aedes ut ovium pastoris sunt apud Camirenses ἐπιμηλίου, apud Naxios ποιμνίου, itemque deus ἀρνιοκόμης colitur, et apud Lesbios ναπαῖος; et multa sunt cognomina per diversas civitates ad dei pastoris officium tendentia. Quapropter universi pecoris antistes et vere pastor agnoscitur.*

Note too that he has temples as a shepherd at Camirus, as Apollo *epimēlios* ('guardian of flocks'); on Naxos, as Apollo *poimnios* ('of the sheep') and similarly as the god 'with lamb's fleece' (*arnokomēs*); and on Lesbos as Apollo *napaïos*; and there are many surnames, used in widely scattered communities, that point to his service as a god of pasturage. That is why he's recognized as the protector of every flocks and herd, a pastoral god in the full sense. (transl. Kaster)

This passage enumerates Apollo's pastoral epithets in the Aegean area: he is ἐπιμήλιος at Rhodian Camirus, ποιμνιος and ἀρνιοκόμης at Naxos, ναπαῖος in Lesbos;<sup>71</sup> besides, many other epithets in the Greek cities refer to the pastoral

<sup>70</sup> This was already indicated by Van der Valk 1963, 308 fn. 22. Syska (1993, 157) argues that Apollo is both a solar divinity and a pastoral one, *vix recte* ("Apollo wird in Sat. I.17, 43 ... νόμιος ... genannt ... weil er als Verkörperung der Sonne *auch* [italics are mine] der Gott der Weiden schlechthin sei"). If the allegorical interpretation is correct, one aspect will substitute for the other.

<sup>71</sup> On this epithet, which could be interpreted geographically, see Chiaï 2013, 237–238.

dimension of the god (*et multa sunt cognomina per diversas civitates ad dei pastoris officium tendentia*). All this demonstrates that Apollo is the actual shepherd and protector of every kind of animal (*quapropter universis pecoris antistes et vere pastor agnoscitur*).

In Apollodorus' view, these epithets, mostly related to flock protection (*ovium* ... ἐπιμήλιος ... ποιμνιος ... ἀρνοκόμης), confirm the pastoral dimension of the god; in Porphyry's eyes, they prove the universal dimension of the solar god, i.e. that he protects all animals. This list may have been drawn from local antiquarians, well known to Apollodorus; furthermore, since we are told that in Greek communities there were many pastoral epithets (*multa sunt cognomina etc.*), without these epithets being mentioned, we may assume that the list was likely longer.

In sum, Porphyry 'solarised' the epithet which was pastoral in ΠΘ and the evidence through which Apollodorus demonstrated it. Yet, at the same time, Porphyry indirectly confirms the presence in ΠΘ of B 766–767 and Φ 448 and the myths mentioned here, as well as the pastoral nature of the epithet (*ex officio pastorali*). Significantly, he preserves a list of pastoral epithets of the god related to local cults which are not otherwise known: they show very well not only the great erudition of Apollodorus, but also the importance of Porphyry-Macrobios as witness of ΠΘ.<sup>72</sup>

### 2.1.6

Let us now proceed to a brief reconstruction of Apollodorus' treatment of νόμιος. This reconstruction aims to explain the contents and their sequence; the *ipsisima verba*, except for the Genevan scholium, are definitively lost. The ΠΘ chapter on the epithet νόμιος can be summarised in the following points:

<sup>72</sup> This Macrobian passage, together with I.17, 22, is attributed to Apollodorus' ΠΘ also by Syska (1993, 240–241), who argues that Porphyry's Περὶ θεῶν ὀνομάτων is a possible *Mittelquelle*. Unfortunately, this correct view is limited to these very passages and does not refer to all 'solar theology' (§ 1.1).

Tab. 14: Apollodorus about Apollo νόμιος: a general survey.

	Homer	<i>Myth.Hom.</i> (ad fr. 95)	<i>Sch.Hom.</i> Ge (fr. 96)	Cornutus	Porphyry (fr. 95)
ambiguity of Apollo's power as νόμιος; comparison with Poseidon			X		
Apollo's relation, as plague god, with animals and humankind	First book of the <i>Iliad</i> ; A 50; (the plague hits animals at first); B 766–767 and Φ 448 (Apollo as horse and herd nurturer)	X	X	X	X
list of local epithets					X

*MH* (on Φ 448) provides a helpful summary of Apollodorus' chapter about νόμιος preserving its conceptual frame (the exegetical scholia on the same passage add very little). The Ge-scholium on Φ 448 preserves a valuable literal quotation from ΠΘ, which compares the epithets of Apollo and Poseidon, but not the following part, except for the reference to B 766–767. Cornutus strongly modifies—or reinterprets—what he reads in ΠΘ: any connection with the human plague is eliminated; νόμιος is limited to the pastoral sphere. Porphyry attaches a solar interpretation to the epithet, which was absent in ΠΘ, construing the material contained in ΠΘ allegorically; yet he alone preserves the list of Apollo's pastoral epithets in the Aegean area.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>73</sup> According to Callimachus, Apollo was termed νόμιος—and, curiously, φοῖβος—also because of his service under Admetus (*Hymn.* IV 47–48: φοῖβον καὶ νόμιον κυκλήσκομεν ἔξετι κείνου || ἐξότ' ἐπ' Ἀμφρυσσῶ ζευγίτιδας ἔτρεφεν ἵππους); the reason thereof was Apollo's love for the boy (v. 49: ἡϊθέου ὑπ' ἔρωτι κεκαυμένος Ἀδμήτοιο), a particular lacking in Homer. Apollodorus, who consulted Callimachus and sometimes criticised him (see 244 *FGrHist* 157d), may have considered it a 'romantic' addition. In the case of Apollo's service for Laomedon, Homer did not specify the cause, and Aristarchus, in the face of much debate surrounding Apollo's and Poseidon's service (see *Sch. Hom. Ge.* Φ 444c: ζητεῖται διὰ τί ἐθήτευσαν), respected the Poet's silence (*Sch. Hom. A.* Φ 444b [Ariston.]: Ὅμηρος οὐ παραδίδωσι αἰτίαν δι' ἣν ἐθήτευσαν οὗτοι οἱ θεοὶ Λαομέδοντι).



## 2.2 Λύκειος, λυκηγενής, λυκοκτόνος

The epithet λύκ(ε)ιος, usually understood either with reference to Lycia or to the 'wolf' (λύκος),<sup>74</sup> was interpreted as solar by Apollodorus, who followed the Stoics in this. According to him, λύκ(ε)ιος was a shortened form of the Homeric λυκηγενής which displayed the correct etymology, 'he who generates the λύκη (the light before the dawn)'; other Homeric epithets helped him to interpret λύκ(ε)ιος in this direction. In his explanation, Apollodorus also includes the noun 'wolf'. He probably rejected the form λυκοκτόνος, which he could find in Sophocles (*El.* 6), as based upon a wrong etymology from 'wolf'. Witnesses in this respect are Heraclitus, author of the *Homeric Allegories*, and Porphyry-Macrobios.

### 2.2.1

We begin with Heraclitus (*Quaest. Hom.* 7.10–11 = 244 *FGrHist* 98):<sup>75</sup>

10. Λυκηγενὴ δὲ προσηγόρευσεν (sc. ὁ Ὅμηρος) αὐτὸν οὐχ ὡς ἐν Λυκίᾳ γεγεννημένον (ἔξω γὰρ τῆς Ὀμηρικῆς ἀναγνώσεως οὗτος ὁ νεώτερος μῦθος)...

(Homer) called him *lykêgenês* not because (Apollo) is born in Lycia—this modern myth is extraneous to the correct interpretation of Homer—... (my translation)

First of all, a geographical interpretation is rejected. In Homer, the god is called λυκηγενής not because he was born in Lycia; this is a later myth (οὗτος ὁ νεώτερος μῦθος), beyond Homer's right comprehension (ἔξω γὰρ τῆς Ὀμηρικῆς ἀναγνώσεως).<sup>76</sup> With the 'later authors' (νεώτεροι), i.e. the post-Homeric poets, Aristarchus' terminology emerges,<sup>77</sup> and not by chance: according to the great

<sup>74</sup> § 2.2.3; see also fn. 92, 95. For modern interpretations of λύκ(ε)ιος, see Graf 2009, 122–124; Burkert 2003, 290ff.; Gershenson 1991, 7–10; Graf 1985, 220ff.; Nilsson 1967, 536–538. About the Homeric λυκηγενής, see West 2013, 257–258; *Lfgre* s.v. λυκηγενής (1719, 39ff.).

<sup>75</sup> This is the text established by Pontani 2005, who provided also a learned commentary thereof. The excerpt was attributed to ΠΘ by Münzel 1883, 6–10, followed by Jacoby 1926. See also Bouffière 1962, XXXIV–XXXV; Pontani 2005, 188 fn. 22.

<sup>76</sup> Pontani 2005, 71 translates: "questa leggenda recente è estranea alla tradizione omerica". *LSJ* records only meanings such as '(public) reading', 'reading' (in a critical-textual sense). In my opinion, this context entails a meaning like 'comprehension', 'interpretation'; clearly, Heraclitus intends to say that this geographical interpretation is not the correct one, since a good interpretation cannot be separated from a good reading; see Schironi 2018, 122–123. On the geographic interpretation, see also fn. 92.

<sup>77</sup> See Severyns 1928, 31ff.

grammarian, later authors cannot be used to explain the Poet for they belong to subsequent ages.<sup>78</sup>

Then a comparison is introduced:

10. ... ἀλλ' ὥσπερ οἶμαι τὴν ἡμέραν ἡριγένειαν ὀνομάζει, τὴν τὸ ἥρ γεννώσαν, τουτέστιν τὸν ὄρθρον, οὕτω λυκηγενῇ προσηγόρευσεν τὸν ἥλιον, ἐπειδὴ τοῦ κατὰ τὴν ὄρθριον ὥραν λυκαυοῦς αὐτός ἐστιν αἴτιος.

...but, in my opinion, such as he calls the dawn *êrigeneia*, 'she, who begets the *êr*', i.d. the first light, so (Homer) called the sun *lykêgenês*, because during the time of the first light he produces the twilight (*lykauges*). (my translation)

Since Homer called the dawn (τὴν ἡμέραν) ἡριγένεια, that is 'she who generates the ἥρ', which is the first light (τουτέστιν τὸν ὄρθρον), he similarly termed Apollo λυκηγενής (οὕτω λυκηγενῇ προσηγόρευσεν τὸν ἥλιον), for the sun generates the light (τοῦ ... λυκαυοῦς) typical of the dawn (τοῦ κατὰ τὴν ὄρθριον ὥραν). Thus, as the compound ἡριγένεια begins with the term ἥρ, explicitly quoted by Heraclitus, so λυκηγενής, another compound, may have begun with the term λύκη, even if it is not mentioned. These two terms, ἥρ and λύκη, may be synonymous, as both are paraphrased with the same meaning: ἥρ as ὄρθρος, λύκη as the light κατὰ τὴν ὄρθριον ὥραν; also, both indicate the light which precedes sunrise. This implies not only a substantial synonymy of the compounds, but also a strong similarity in their structure: ἡριγένεια could be easily interpreted as the feminine of an unattested \*ἥρι-γενής, which, in turn, was symmetrical to λυκη-γενής. Apollodorus may be the author of this interpretation, since it is based on the meticulous scrutiny of Homeric vocabulary, from which he deduced even more ancient and unattested words.<sup>79</sup>

An alternative interpretation follows:

11. ... ἢ ὅτι τὸν λυκάβαντα γεννᾷ, τουτέστιν τὸν ἐνιαυτόν, ὅρος γὰρ ἐτησίου χρόνου διαδραμῶν ἥλιος ἐν μέρει τὰ δώδεκα ζῶδια.

... or because he generates the *lykabas*, i.e. the year; as boundary of the year's time, the sun passes over the twelve signs in turn. (my translation)

<sup>78</sup> It is the well-known Alexandrian maxim—though Porphyrian in its wording—of “explaining Homer through Homer” (“Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὀμήρου σαφηνίζειν): see fn. 45.

<sup>79</sup> See Pontani 2005, 188, fn. 22. Bouffière, following Plut. *De facie* 931F, interprets λυκαυγές as ‘*crepuscule*’: see Bouffière 1962, 9 fn. 2. Accordingly, he prefers the reading κατὰ τὴν αἴθριον ὥραν against the reading of ὄρθριον accepted by Pontani. In this way, the parallelism between the two epithets disappears.

The god is called λυκηγενής, as he generates the λυκάβας, the year,<sup>80</sup> because the sun, crossing through the twelve signs one after the other (διαδραμὼν ἥλιος ἐν μέρει τὰ δώδεκα ζώδια), defines the duration of a year (ὄρος ... ἔτησιον χρόνου). Apollodorus may have valued this interpretation as it was a sort of internal one: a rare Homeric term, λυκάβας,<sup>81</sup> was used in order to explain another word of the Poet. Furthermore, it was a solar interpretation, like his own. Anyway, the name of author of this interpretation is not preserved.

## 2.2.2

We can now read Macrobius-Porphyry (Macr. Sat. I.17, 36–40 = 244 FGrHist 95):<sup>82</sup>

36. *Apollinis Lycii plures accipimus cognominis causas. Antipater Stoicus Lycium Apollinem nuncupatum scribit ἀπὸ τοῦ λευκαίνεσθαι πάντα φωτίζοντος ἡλίου* (36 SVF 3). *Cleanthes Lycium Apollinem appellatum notat quod, velut lupi pecora rapiunt, ita ipse quoque umorem eripit radiis* (541 SVF 1).

I have learned many explanations for the surname of Apollo *lykios*. The Stoic Antipater (fr. 36 SVF) writes that Apollo *lykios* got his name “from the fact that all thing appears white (*leukainesthai*) when the sun shines”. Cleanthes (fr. 541 SVF) remarks that Apollo is called *lykios* because, just as wolves (*lykioi*) snatch animals from the flocks, so the sun itself takes away dampness with its rays. (transl. Kaster)

The chapter on the epithet λύκιος initially mentions the interpretations of the Stoic Cleanthes and Antipater of Tarsus: both interpreted λύκιος as a solar epithet. Antipater derived his interpretation from the fact that everything is whitened when the sun shines (ἀπὸ τοῦ λευκαίνεσθαι πάντα φωτίζοντος ἡλίου); in the epithet, Cleanthes—perhaps considering the phenomenon of ἀναθυμίασις—acknowledged the power of the sun to dry humidity coming from the ocean (*ipse quoque umorem eripit radiis*), which is the sun's nourishment.<sup>83</sup> In this sense, we

<sup>80</sup> This interpretation was common in antiquity: see West 2013, 253; *lykabas* remains however quite obscure. For some modern interpretations, see West 2013, 252–257; Quattordio Moreschini 1988.

<sup>81</sup> Hom. ξ 160 (= τ 306): τοῦδ' αὐτοῦ λυκάβαντος. The etymology is discussed: see previous note.

<sup>82</sup> The first to establish a relation between Heraclitus and Macrobius as (mostly indirect) readers of ΠΘ was Münzel 1883, 14–17; he was followed by Jacoby, who included a large part of the Apollinean chapter from the ‘solar theology’ as fr. 95 of his collection.

<sup>83</sup> See Bénatouïl 2005, 220–221; Watanabe 1988, 82–85.

can better understand the comparison with the voracious wolves (*velut lupi pecora rapiunt*).<sup>84</sup>

This part is missing in Heraclitus; the Stoics are, in any case, frequently mentioned throughout the ‘solar theology’ and are part of the philosophical core of ΠΘ (§ 1.1). Moreover, Heraclitus is not interested in quoting Apollodorus’ *auctores* (above, § 2.2.1). The interpretations of Antipater and Cleanthes do not fully overlap with that of Apollodorus, however: each offers a different etymology (Antipater from λευκόν, Cleanthes from λύκος [sc. in solar sense], Apollodorus from λύκη). Nonetheless, the grammarian mentions their interpretations, as they could be useful to prove the solar nature of the epithet, which was usually considered a pastoral epithet only. Cleanthes and Antipater may have indeed led him in a solar direction.

37. *Prisci Graecorum primam lucem, quae praecedit solis exortus*, λύκην appellaverunt ἀπὸ τοῦ λευκοῦ. *Id temporis hodieque* λυκόφως cognominant.

The earliest Greeks called the first light that precedes the dawn *lykê*, from ‘white’ (*leukos*); that’s the time that nowadays they call ‘twilight’ (*lykophôs*). (transl. Kaster)

The most ancient Greeks termed as λύκη the first light before sunrise (*primam lucem, quae praecedit solis exortus*); the name derives from ‘white’ (ἀπὸ τοῦ λευκοῦ). Nowadays, this phenomenon is termed λυκόφως, similar to the ancient λύκη. Clearly, this is the explanation we read in Heraclitus, this time more precise in its lexical elements: λύκη is explicitly identified.

38. *De quo tempore poeta (sc. Homerus) ita scribit*: ἥμος δ’ οὐτ’ ἄρ πω ἡώς, ἔτι δ’ ἀμφιλύκη νύξ (H 433). *Idem Homerus*: εὐχέο δ’ Ἀπόλλωνι λυκηγενεῖ κλυτοτόξῳ (Δ 101), *quod significat* τῷ γεννῶντι τῇν λύκην, *id est qui progenerat exortu suo lucem. Radiorum enim splendor propinquantem solem longe lateque praecedens atque caliginem paulatim extenuans tenebrarum parit lucem.*

About that time the Poet writes (*Il.* 7.433) “when it was not yet dawn, but still the half-lit (*amphilykê*) night” and Homer again, “pray to Apollo *lykêgenês*, famed from his bow”, where the epithet means ‘he who begets light’ when he rises. For in heralding the sun’s approach far and wide and gradually diminishing the shadow’s gloom, his rays’ brilliance gives birth to light. (transl. Kaster)

Homer says about this time of the day, right before dawn: “when it was not yet dawn, but ἀμφιλύκη night” (H 433: ἥμος δ’ οὐτ’ ἄρ πω ἡώς, ἔτι δ’ ἀμφιλύκη νύξ).

<sup>84</sup> See the violent terms *rapiunt ... eripit*.

This is one of the lucky cases where the Poet explains himself:<sup>85</sup> when is the night ἀμφιλύκη? The context clearly says when it is not dawn yet (ἥμος δ' οὐτ' ἄρ πω ἦώς). Evidently, the adjective was intended to mean: when the night is already surrounded (ἀμφι-) by light (λύκη).<sup>86</sup> The latter term appears also in Apollo's epithet λυκηγενής: Athena, in the guise of Laodokos, invites the Lycian Pandaros to pray the god (Δ 101: εὖχεο δ' Ἀπόλλωνι λυκηγενεῖ).

Despite the Lycian origin of the hero, λυκηγενής means 'he who generates λύκη' (*quod significat τῷ γεννῶντι τὴν λύκην, id est qui progenerat exortu suo lucem*), for the brightness of the sun rays precedes the sun itself (*radiorum enim splendor propinquantem solem ... praecedens*) and gradually weakens the darkness (*caliginem paulatim extenuans tenebrarum*) producing light (*parit lucem*).

What is the relationship of this interpretation to Heraclitus? Both Macrobius and Heraclitus consider the Homeric λυκηγενής; ἡριγένεια, absent in Macrobius, is useful to understand λυκηγενής as it provides the term ἥρ, synonymous with λύκη. Macrobius reports a more precise paraphrasis of λυκηγενής than Heraclitus (τῷ γεννῶντι τὴν λύκην vs. λυκαυγοῦς αὐτός ἐστιν αἴτιος); furthermore, he preserves ἀμφιλύκη, which is fundamental to postulate the prehistoric λύκη. This term, which seems to be understood by Heraclitus, is made implicit only in Macrobius. Thus, we are clearly dealing with the same interpretation derived from the same source: through ἀμφιλύκη we can postulate the existence of λύκη (1); the latter helps us understand Apollo's epithet λυκηγενής—which was the object of ΠΘ—(2); λυκηγενής has a semantic and structural parallel in the Dawn's epithet ἡριγένεια (3). The first two points are preserved in Macrobius; the last two in Heraclitus; only the second is attested by both witnesses.<sup>87</sup> But, obviously, the discussion requires all three points.

39. *Neque minus Romani, ut pleraque alia ex Graeco, ita et lucem videntur a λύκη figurasse. Annum quoque vetustissimi Graecorum λυκάβαντα appellabant ἀπὸ τοῦ λύκου id est sole βαϊνόμενον καὶ μετρούμενον.*

<sup>85</sup> See Porphyry in the *Homeric Questions* (Sodano 1970, 61–62 (*quaestio* XI)) = Schrader 1880, 300, 6–9): ἀξιῶν δὲ ἐγὼ Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν αὐτὸν ἐξηγουμένον ἑαυτὸν ὑπεδείκνυσον, ποτὲ μὲν παρακειμένως (sc. beside, in the same place), ἄλλοτε δ' ἐν ἄλλοις (sc. in other passages) about Homer who explains himself, cf. fn. 45. In this context, ἀμφιλύκη is mentioned (Sodano 1970, 61–62 (*quaestio* XI)) = Schrader 1880, 300, 6–9): φιλοτιμεῖται καὶ τὸ λυκόφως ἐξηγήσασθαι (H 433): οὕτε γὰρ εἰ μηδέπω ἦώς, ἔτι ἦν νύξ, ἀλλ' ἡ ἀμφιλύκη ἦν, ὁ βαθὺς ὄρθρος.

<sup>86</sup> For a modern interpretation of the term, see West 2013, 262–264, with further bibliography.

<sup>87</sup> See also Porphyry, *Hom. Quaest.* 62, 17–18 Sodano: τὸ δὲ πρὸ τῆς ἔω λυκόφως καὶ “νύξ ἀμφιλύκη.” Λυκόφως is used also by Macrobius § 37.

Just so, the Romans seem to have formed *lux* ('light') from *lykê*, just as they derived most other words from Greek. The most ancient Greek also called the year *lykabas*, from "that which the sun (*lykos*) passes over (*bainein*) and measures". (transl. Kaster)

In Macrobius we find a Latin addition (see § 1.1) to the previous argument (*neque ... figurasse*): in effect, for the Roman compiler *lucem* was very easily derivable from λύκη. Then we have a second interpretation, from λυκάβας 'year', already found in Heraclitus. Although he does not record the etymology of the epithet preserved in Heraclitus ('he who gives birth to the year'), Macrobius reports the etymology of λυκάβας, that is: λύκος, i.e. the 'sun' (ἀπό τοῦ λύκου *id est sole*), which proceeds and accordingly measures (sc. the time: βαίνόμενον καὶ μετρούμενον). Heraclitus' statement that "the sun, which crosses through each of the twelve signs, is the delimitation of the year" (ὄρος γὰρ ἑτησίου χρόνου διαδραμῶν ἥλιος ἐν μέρει τὰ δώδεκα ζώδια), is a slightly different paraphrasis.

By comparing the two witnesses, we can thus reconstruct the λυκάβας-interpretation in the following way: firstly, the sun is called λύκος (Porph.: ἀπό τοῦ λύκου *id est sole*);<sup>88</sup> the year, perceived as the sun crossing through all the zodiac constellations, is defined as λυκάβας, i.e. "the sun which proceeds (and measures the time)" (Her.: διαδραμῶν ἥλιος ... δώδεκα ζώδια; Porph.: *annum ... λυκάβαντα appellabant* ἀπό τοῦ λύκου *id est sole* βαίνόμενον καὶ μετρούμενον); λυκηγενής is referred to the sun as 'he who generates the year' (Her.: ὅτι τὸν λυκάβαντα γεννᾷ). This last term which includes the previous ones (λύκος > λυκάβας > λυκηγενής) seems to be the goal of the etymological argument; all three points appear to belong to the same interpretation, of which Macrobius attests the first two and Heraclitus the last two.

In my opinion, it is clear that Heraclitus and Porphyry followed the same source, evidently ΠΘ. This is also supported by the fact that in both authors we find the same sequence: λυκηγενής is interpreted initially through λύκη, then through λυκάβας.

40. λύκον autem solem vocari etiam Lycopolitana Thebaidos civitas testimonio est, quae pari religione Apollinem itemque lupum, hoc est λύκον, colit, in utroque solem venerans, quod hoc animal rapit et consumit omnia in modum solis, ac plurimum oculorum acie cernens tenebras noctis evincit. Ipsos quoque λύκους a λύκη *id est* a prima luce appellatos quidam putant, quia hae ferae maxime id tempus aptum rapiendo pecori observant, quod antelucanum post nocturnam famem ad pastum stabulis expellitur.

<sup>88</sup> From λευκός = 'white'? It unlikely derives from the Apollodorean λύκη, since the λυκάβας-interpretation is concurrent.

That the sun is called *lykos* is attested by the community of Lykopolis in the Thebaid, which pays cult to both Apollo and the wolf—that is, *lykos*—in both cases worshipping the sun, because that animal snatches and consumes all things, like the sun, and overcomes night's shadows in seeing a great deal with its sharp eyes. (41) Some think that *lykoi* ('wolves') are named after *lykê*, or first light, because these animals look especially for that time to ravage the flock, which is driven from the fold just before dawn to pasture after the night's fast. (transl. Kaster)

This part, which is totally absent in Heraclitus, refers to the wolves. This fact is only apparently odd: as will be seen, it is an extension of the λύκη-interpretation. Firstly, there is a note on Egyptian religion. That the sun is called 'wolf' (λύκος) is demonstrated by the inhabitants of Lykopolis in Thebaid, who venerate the sun in the form of Apollo and of the animal (*Lycopolitana Thebaidos civitas ... quae pari religione Apollinem itemque lupum, hoc est λύκον, colit, in utroque solem venerans*), since the animal catches and devours everything like the sun (*quod hoc animal rapit et consumit omnia in modum solis*) and with its eyes penetrates the darkness more than other animals (*ac plurimum oculorum acie cernens tenebras noctis evincit*). This part, like other notes about non-Greek religions, may be of Porphyrian origin (§ 1.1). Porphyry may have drawn inspiration from Cleanthes, quoted in Apollodorus, since the Stoic made a direct comparison between the sun and the animal (above).

Then the very name of the animal is etymologised. According to someone, the noun comes from λύκη, the first light (*ipsos quoque λύκους a λύκη id est a prima luce appellatos quidam putant*), since the time of the day when the sun shines is the aptest to raid the flocks (*quia ... maxime id tempus aptum rapiendo pecori*), and in these very hours, before dawn (*antelucanum*), the hungry flocks are conducted out of their stables to eat (*post nocturnam famem ad pastum stabulis expellitur*).<sup>89</sup> The presence of λύκη, which Apollodorus rigorously derives from Homeric terms, strongly suggests attributing this part to the grammarian.<sup>90</sup> The Egyptian note could derive from Porphyry's syncretistic additions (§ 1.1).<sup>91</sup>

Given Apollodorus' interest in divine epithets, why would he need to etymologise the noun 'wolf'? As seen above, he interpreted λύκιος as a solar epithet; besides the geographic interpretation, the pastoral one was the most credited

<sup>89</sup> After deriving λύκος from λύκη, the explanation easily followed: the wolf took its name from the light typical of the hours when it hunts.

<sup>90</sup> The connection between wolf and night ἀμφιλύκη emerges also in another fragment of ΠΘ, 244 FGrHist 354 (an Eustathian note, probably from Porphyry: see above, § 1.1): οὕτω καὶ λύκος Ἀπόλλωνος ἄθυρμα διὰ τὴν ἀμφιλύκην νύκτα, μεθ' ἣν ἐκφαίνεται ἥλιος.

<sup>91</sup> Conceptually, this part depends on the following: only after Apollodorus had inserted the wolf in the solar interpretation could Porphyry add his note on Egyptian religion.

one. In order to defeat definitively the latter interpretation, Apollodorus solarised the very name of the animal. How could Apollo λῦκιος be considered the god ‘of the wolves’ but not a solar god, once it had been demonstrated that the animal took its name from the sun?

### 2.2.3

It is now time for a brief summary and some considerations. Firstly, Apollodorus rejected a geographical interpretation. This interpretation was sustained by post-Homeric authors, and this could well be a reason to reject it.<sup>92</sup> It must be said that the grammarian partially contravenes his own criteria in interpreting divine epithets: according to 244 *FGrHist* 353, which is a fundamental document to reconstruct his categories in interpreting divine epithets, a geographical interpretation is acceptable if the epithet is mentioned by a Homeric character.<sup>93</sup> The second time λυκηγενής appears, it is quoted by the narrator (Δ 119: εὔχετο δ’ Ἀπόλλωνι λυκηγενεῖ κλυτοτόξῳ), but it is referred to the Lycian Pandaros who prays to the god of his own land. This happens because, a few lines above, Athena, in the guise of the Trojan Laodokos, had invited the Lycian hero to pray to Apollo (Δ 101: εὔχεο δ’ Ἀπόλλωνι λυκηγενεῖ κλυτοτόξῳ). Although the situation does not exactly correspond to the above-mentioned criteria—the epithet is quoted by a non-Lycian character, then by the narrator—the local meaning of the epithet is clearly at play. The grammarian may have rejected this option due to his preference for the solar interpretation.<sup>94</sup> In any case, Aristarchus’ terminology indicates its Apollodorean origin (§ 2.2.1). We read this part only in Heraclitus.

<sup>92</sup> In effect, the Homeric λυκηγενής is usually explained in this sense: Arrian fr. 34 Roos; Menander *περὶ ἐπιδεικτικῶν* 439, 13ff.; Himer. *Declam.* 27, 20; *Sch. Hom.* bT, Δ 101b; II 233a Erbse; Steph. Byz. s.v. Δωδώνη (90, 5–6 Billerbeck-Zubler); Eustath. *Comm. in Il.* I.555, 13–14; I.708, 1–2 Van der Valk; Hesych. λ 1376 Latte; *Et.M.* 767, 54 Gaisford. The epithet is referred to the wolf only in Aelian (*NA* X 26), who presents a very interesting argumentation, alternative to Apollodorus. Λυκηγενής is referred to the sun only in Johannes Galenus diaconus’ allegorical commentary on Hesiod’s *Theogony* (319, 27–33 Flach), but this very part is ultimately drawn from ΠΘ (244 *FGrHist* 990). About Galenus’ work, which seems to preserve a Hellenistic commentary on the Hesiodic poem, see Filoni 2018, 10–127; about the material within Galenus’ work which could derive from ΠΘ, see Filoni 2018, 121–122.

<sup>93</sup> About this fragment, see Filoni 2018, 304–305, 513–519. The distinction between what is said by the narrator or by a character is Aristarchan: see § 2.3.

<sup>94</sup> The grammarian, in his earlier work on the Homeric catalogue of ships, may have interpreted it geographically: when he wrote this work, he was not yet interested in theology as at the time



Cleanthes and Antipater belong to the Stoic 'bibliography' of ΠΘ (see p. 234). Although they interpret Apollo's epithet in a slightly different way, they both indicate the solar nature of λύκιος (§ 2.2.2). They probably offered Apollodorus this fundamental idea, which the grammarian reformulated, giving it a Homeric basis. The grammarian may have objected that they had considered the usual form λύκιος, and not the Homeric λυκηγενής (see also below). Cleanthes and Antipater are cited as means to introduce the 'right' interpretation, namely the solar one.<sup>95</sup>

Apollodorus derives λυκηγενής from λύκη<sup>96</sup>. This interpretation was likely conceived by the grammarian himself, since it is closely related to Homeric lexicon, rigorously examined. It must be said that Homer never mentions λύκη: the term is obtained by analysing one epithet—ἀμφιλύκη of H 433—and is applied to another, λυκηγενής;<sup>97</sup> the epithet of a similar goddess, ἡριγένεια, offered a semantic and structural parallel. This well reflects Apollodorus' idea of Homeric

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of ΠΘ. Λυκηγενής was likely interpreted in this way also by Aristarchus, who distinguished between two Lycias, a Troadic one—homeland to Pandaros—and the one at the borders with Caria: see Filoni 2004, 556–569; the fact that the Lykian Pandaros invoked an Apollo λυκηγενής, according to Aristarchan categories, clearly supported a geographical interpretation. See also the case of Apollo σμινθεύς (§ 2.3).

**95** In antiquity, λύκ(ε)ιος—differently from λυκηγενής—was mostly interpreted referring to the wolf, either in the sense that Apollo himself was identified with the animal (mostly in Argos) or that the god was a 'wolf-slayer': see Finglass 2007, 94–95 (except for Hes. Fr. 216 M.-W. and Diod. 4.81.2, which refer to Aristaeus). Apart from Antipater and Cleanthes, the epithet was interpreted as solar only in Servius (*ad Aen.* IV 377): *sive quod est λευκός a candore: idem enim et sol creditur*.

**96** This interpretation seems to emerge in *Sch. Aesch. Sept.* 145a Smith: λύκιόν φησι τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα ... διὰ τὸ λυκόφως ποιεῖν τῆς νυκτὸς ὑποχωρούσης· Ἀπόλλων γὰρ ὁ ἥλιος. In the other version of the scholium, 145b Smith, we find a chromatic note (λυκόφως δὲ καλεῖται διὰ τὸ ἔχειν τὸν λύκον τοιάνδε χροῖαν), which could be not extraneous to Apollodorus: cf. 244 *FGrHist* 355 (on the epithets of the Dawn, κροκόπεπλος and ῥοδοδάκτυλος, interpreted as a different mixture of white and black).

**97** Apollodorus' rigour in analyzing the epithet can be compared to that of his teacher Aristarchus: see Schironi 2018, 374–376. Apollodorus is not the first to interpret ἀμφιλύκη this way; Apollonius Rhodius explained it in the same terms: see *Arg.* II.669–671. It was a Homeric *hapax* (H 433) which undoubtedly drew the attention of ancient exegetes. It was certainly considered by Aristarchus: unfortunately, the A scholium to this very passage records only its nature of *hapax*, not its meaning (*Sch. Hom. A.* H 433a Erbse [Aristonicus]). It is also quoted by other poets: see West 2013, 262 fn. 23.

supremacy over all other sources: the Poet is the most ancient witness, and if correctly understood, he can cast light on the very nature of the gods, which was well known to the first humans (§ 1.2).<sup>98</sup>

If the grammarian considered the Homeric λυκηγενής, what was the relationship, in his eyes, between it and the form λύκιος? The Macrobian chapter is devoted to this term (36: *Apollinis Lycii plures accipimus cognominis causas*) and to λυκηγενής. Nothing explicit is stated; yet, the latter was etymologically transparent—sc. according to the etymology given by the grammarian (λυκη-γενής, ‘he who generates the λύκη’); the same cannot be said of λύκιος, which rather suggests a wrong etymology. And then λυκηγενής is attested by Homer, whereas λύκιος is found in later authors only. According to Apollodorus’ categories, this can only mean that the former was the earlier and correct form, whereas the latter a later one in which the right etymology was no longer evident. The grammarian may have considered λύκιος a *Kurzform* of λυκηγενής.

The author of the λυκάβας-interpretation is unfortunately anonymous. Apollodorus, who mentions this interpretation right after his own, may have valued it both since it was an internal Homeric explanation—λυκάβας helped to interpret λυκηγενής—and because λυκηγενής was intended in solar terms. Besides, this interpretation considered the Homeric λυκηγενής, not the usual λύκιος.<sup>99</sup>

Finally, the noun ‘wolf’. The author of this interpretation is probably Apollodorus, as it involves the term λύκη. The interpretation of the noun ‘wolf’ via λύκη was useful in superseding the pastoral interpretation, ‘solarising’ its starting point (§ 2.2.2).

According to this reconstruction, Apollodorus’ treatment of λυκηγενής/λύκιος is the following:

<sup>98</sup> It is not by chance that in Macrobius we find some recurring expressions such as *prisci Graecorum* (§ 37) and *vetustissimi Graecorum* (§ 39); Homer appears to be only conveying older views: see Long 1992, 56–57; see also Most 1989, 2027–2029.

<sup>99</sup> The Pergamenian Crates of Mallus, interested in astronomy, is a possible candidate. This grammarian was widely discussed and criticised at Alexandria: see Broggiato 2001, XIX; as for Apollodorus, he is certainly quoted in the *Commentary on the Catalogue of Ships* (244 *FGrHist* 157e [Strab. I.2, 24] = fr. 37 Broggiato), where Crates’ explanation of the Ethiopians ‘divided into two’ is compared to Aristarchus’. In Porphyry-Macrobius (*Macr. Sat.* I.17, 16), Aristarchus’ and Crates’ interpretations of Apollo’s epithet ἥϊος are juxtaposed: see fr. 23 Broggiato; Schironi 2018, 367–368. In Heraclitus 27, Crates’ quotation (fr. 3 Broggiato) follows a paragraph containing Apollodorean material (Hom. B 426, useful to identify Hephaistos and the fire, see 244 *FGrHist* 353); also in this case, ΠΘ could convey Crates’ opinion.

**Tab. 15:** Apollodorus on Apollo λυκηγενής: a general survey.

		Heracl.	Porph.-Macr.
A	geographical interpretation of λυκηγενής (from Lycia); authors νεώτεροι	X	
B	solar interpretations (Antipater, Cleanthes)		X
C	Apollodorus' interpretation: Homeric λυκηγενής as 'he who generates the λύκη (the light before the dawn)'; λύκη deduced from ἀμφιλύκη (H 433); λυκηγενής symmetrical to ἡριγένεια; λύκιος shortened form of λυκηγενής	X	X
D	λυκάβας-interpretation: λυκηγενής as 'he who generates the λυκάβας'; λυκάβας the year, as 'the λύκος which proceeds'; λύκος as 'the sun'; uncertain <i>auctor</i>	X	X
E	the noun 'wolf' explained through λύκη		X

Both witnesses preserve, in the same sequence, points C and D, though with different particulars (above); this suggests a common source. Heraclitus quotes Apollodorus explicitly, at the very beginning of the paragraph dedicated to Apollo's epithets, which is accepted by Jacoby as a fragment of ΠΘ (244 *FGrHist* 98). As far as Macrobius-Porphyry are concerned, we know that ΠΘ is the core of the Apollinian section of the 'solar theology' (§ 1.1). The other points seem to belong to Apollodorus' chapter on λυκηγενής, as they cite Aristarchus' terminology (A), sources typical of ΠΘ (B), or interpretations which presuppose Apollodorus' λύκη (E).<sup>100</sup>

## 2.2.4

According to this reconstruction, Apollodorus is unlikely to have accepted the form of the epithet he found in Sophocles' *Electra*, λυκοκτόνος (Soph. *El.* 6). The epithet is not mentioned in Macrobius or Heraclitus, although the grammarian probably knew it both because of his broad knowledge of literature and because the epithet is cited by one of his readers, namely Cornutus (§ 2.2.5). We read (Soph. *El.* 6–7):

αὕτη δ', Ὀρέστα, τοῦ λυκοκτόνου θεοῦ  
ἀγορὰ Λύκειος.

**100** On this Macrobian chapter, see also Chiai 2013, 230–234.

The expression “the Lycian agora of the wolf-killer god” appears consistent only intending λυκοκτόνος as an internal explanation of λύκειος<sup>101</sup>—which is a slight variant of λύκιος.

Why should Apollodorus not accept this epithet? Firstly, Sophocles is a post-Homeric author (νεώτερος); then, he is clearly in contrast with Homer—i.e. with how the Poet was understood by the grammarian: λυκηγενής, the right form of the epithet, is connected to λύκη (§ 2.2.3). Finally, the Sophoclean epithet is very clear in its etymology: λυκο-κτόνος can only mean the ‘wolf-slayer’. In Apollodorus’ view, this implies that it is wrong not only in its meaning but *also in its form*, as these two aspects cannot be separated. We find a very similar case in another fragment of ΠΘ (244 *FGrHist* 353):

τὸ ἐπίθετον Ἀφροδίτης, ὃ οὐκ ἐνόησαν οἱ πρὸ ἡμῶν τί σημαίνει. συμπλανηθέντες γὰρ τῷ Ἡσίοδῳ ἔδοξαν ὅτι Κύπρις λέγεται, ὥς φησιν Ἡσίοδος, Κυπρογένεια, διὸ γεννᾶται {ἐν τῷ} “περικλύστῳ ἐνὶ Κύπρῳ” (Hes. *Th.* 199) ... ἔστι γοῦν κατὰ συγκοπὴν εἰρημένον κύπορις, ἢ τὸ κύειν πορίσκουσα. ἴδιον γὰρ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης τοῦτο· οὐ γὰρ ἄλλως γυναῖκες κύϊσκουσιν χωρὶς τῆς ἀφροδισιακῆς συνουσίας.

My predecessors did not understand what the epithet of Aphrodite (i.e. *kypris*) means. They, misled by Hesiod, held that *kypris* means, just as Hesiod said, *kyprogeneia* because she is born “in Cyprus surrounded by the sea” (*Th.* 199) ... Actually, (*kypris*) is *kyporis* pronounced in syncopated form, “she who permits to conceive”. This is proper to Aphrodite: women do not conceive otherwise, i.e. without sexual intercourse.

Apollodorus’ predecessors did not correctly understand the meaning of κύπρις. Misled by Hesiod, who described the birth of Aphrodite, they argued that κύπρις could also be expressed as κυπρογένεια, for the goddess was born in Kypros (Κύπρις λέγεται ... Κυπρογένεια, διὸ γεννᾶται ... ἐνὶ Κύπρῳ). The right interpretation is however a different one: κύπρις is a syncopated form of κύπορις, whose meaning is “she who enables conception” (ἢ τὸ κύειν πορίσκουσα), since women do not conceive without sexual union (οὐ γὰρ ἄλλως γυναῖκες κύϊσκουσιν χωρὶς τῆς ἀφροδισιακῆς συνουσίας).

<sup>101</sup> See Jebb 1894, 7 (*ad El.* 6–7): “Sophocles here explains it (sc. λύκειος) by λυκοκτόνος...”; Finglass 2007, 94–95. The latter scholar notes a tension between Sophocles, who intended the epithet in this sense (‘wolf-slayer’), and the Argive tradition, according to which Apollo was indicated as ‘the wolf’ (Finglass *loc. cit.*).

Also, the later and incorrect κυπρογένεια, quoted in Hesiod, derived from an earlier and correct term, κύπρις, attested by Homer;<sup>102</sup> clearly, the epithet was deformed in order to convey a false etymology, affirming that the goddess was born in Cyprus. In my opinion, Apollodorus considered Sophocles' λυκοκτόνος in the same way as the Hesiodic κυπρογένεια: he rejected it as a non-Homeric epithet and as clearly inseparable from an incorrect etymology. From this very case we learn that the grammarian could reject *a whole epithet*, not only one interpretation thereof.

## 2.2.5

After reading Heraclitus and Macrobius and having reconstructed, as much as possible, Apollodorus' argumentation, we can now read Cornutus (69, 5–9 Torres):

ἐπεὶ δ' ἐν τοῖς λοιμοῖς ὡς ἐπίπαν δοκεῖ τὰ θρέμματα πημαίνεσθαι πρῶτον καὶ συνεχέστερον <ἢ Lang> καθ' αὐτὰ φθείρεσθαι λοιμικῶς, κατὰ τοῦτο καὶ τὴν τῶν ποιμνίων ἐπιμέλειαν ἀνέθηκαν αὐτῷ, νόμιον καὶ λύκιον καὶ λυκοκτόνον προσαγορεύοντες.

Since during the plagues the animals seem mostly to be damaged at first, and they die because of the plague more frequently than because of internal causes, therefore men attributed to him the care of the flocks, calling him *nomios* 'pastoral', *lykios* 'of the wolf' and *lykoktonos* 'wolf-killer'.

As seen above (§ 2.1.4), though altering some aspects of Apollodorus' interpretation of νόμιος, Cornutus accepted its pastoral dimension. But, according to the Stoic philosopher, λύκιος and λυκοκτόνος fall in the same area: humankind indicated that the god protects the flocks through *all* these epithets. Clearly, this contrasts with Apollodorus who considered them as forms erroneously derived from the Homeric λυκηγενής (§ 2.2.4); this last form is not even mentioned in Cornutus.

As in the case of νόμιος, these differences do not mean that Cornutus did not consult ΠΘ; rather, he did not follow it slavishly. According to the Stoic, the pastoral dimension, still visible in νόμιος, was to be preserved. On the other hand, he may have been unconvinced by Apollodorus' refined explanation based on

<sup>102</sup> Strangely enough, only in the fifth book (Hom. E 330, 422, 458, 760, 883). About the epithet, see Cassio 2012.

literary words. As a matter of fact, Cornutus did not necessarily embrace Apollodorus' categories, such as Homer's supremacy in explaining divine epithets; accordingly, he dropped the rare λυκηγενής, with its solar interpretation, in favour of the usual λύκιος; Sophocles' λυκοκτόνος was recovered because of its etymological clarity. Once again, Cornutus appears to be an unreliable witness—or a free interpreter—of his main source.<sup>103</sup>

### 2.3 Apollo Σμινθεύς

The case of Apollo's epithet σμινθεύς,<sup>104</sup> quoted by Homer (A 39), is exemplary of the frequent situation in which Porphyry-Macrobios is the only witnesses. Are we dealing with an interpretation by Apollodorus or Porphyry? We read (Macr. *Sat.* I.17, 48): Σμινθεύς *cognominatur*, ὅτι ζέων θεῖ, *quia fervens currit*... Apollo was termed σμινθεύς for he, like the sun, 'runs boiling' (ζέων θεῖ ... *fervens currit*).<sup>105</sup> This solar interpretation has no parallels. In my opinion, it is an invention by Porphyry; Apollodorus probably understood the epithet otherwise. A first possibility is the geographical interpretation, like the one proposed by his teacher Aristarchus who derived σμινθεύς from the—unattested—Troadic town of Sminthe (Ap. *Soph.* s.v. Σμινθεῦ [p. 143, 9–15 Bekker]):

Aristarchus [uncertain source] | Apion | Aristarchus [as above]<sup>106</sup>

ἐπίθετον Ἀπόλλωνος· κατὰ τὸν Ἀρίσταρχον ἀπὸ πόλεως Τρωικῆς Σμίνθης καλουμένης. | ὁ δὲ Ἀπίων (fr. 122 Neitzel) ἀπὸ τῶν μυῶν, οἱ σμίνθιοι καλοῦνται. καὶ ἐν Ῥόδῳ Σμίνθεια ἐορτὴ, ὅτι τῶν μυῶν ποτε λυμαιομένων τὸν καρπὸν τῶν ἀμπελώνων Ἀπόλλων καὶ Διόνυσος διέφθειραν τοὺς μύας. | ἄλλ' Ἀρίσταρχος ἀπρεπὲς ἡγεῖται ἀπὸ χαμαιπετοῦς ζώου τὸν θεὸν ἐπιθετῶ κοσμεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ ποιητοῦ.

Epithet of Apollo, derived, according to Aristarchus, from the town called Sminthe in the Troad. Apion, instead, derives the epithet from the mice, which are called *sminthioi*. In Rhodes there is a holiday, the *Smintheia*, since Apollo and Dionysus killed the mice which

<sup>103</sup> On Cornutus as a witness of ΠΘ, see also Filoni 2018.

<sup>104</sup> On the epithet, see Chiai 2013, 234–235 with bibliography; Graf 2009, 23–25; Burkert 2003, 480; Syska 1993, 162–163 with bibliography; Nilsson 1967, 534–535. Probably, it derives from the non-Greek σμίνθος, 'mouse', reported by many sources: see Chantraine 1999, 1028.

<sup>105</sup> The etymology attests the later pronunciation of zeta (ζέων) as a sibilant (σμ-): Lejeune 1972, 115–116, 119.

<sup>106</sup> The sources are distinguished following Neitzel 1977, 280 (*ad fr.* 122); but see below. Apion is a direct—and important—source of Apollonius' lexicon. I only indicated uncertainty about the source of Aristarchus' view. Apion interpreted σμινθεύς according to the traditional—and pre-Aristarchan—etymology, from σμίνθος, 'mouse': Neitzel 1977, 281.

damaged the fruits of the vineyard. But Aristarchus holds unfitting that the Poet (i.e. Homer) could adorn Apollo through an epithet drawn from an animal which lives on the ground. (my translation)

The great grammarian considered it improper (Ἀρίσταρχος ἀπρεπὲς ἡγεῖται) for a god to receive an epithet from such a humble creature as a mouse (ἀπὸ χαμαιπετοῦς ζώου).<sup>107</sup> Aristarchus had a reason to interpret it geographically: σμινθεύς is quoted in the prayer of Cryses, alongside Apollinean cult places in the Troad such as Chrysa, Killa and Tenedos (A 37–39):

κλυθί μευ, ἀργυρότοξ', ὃς Χρῦσιν ἀμφιβέβηκας,  
Κίλλαν τε ζαθέην Τενέδοιό τε Ἴφι ἀνάσσεις,  
σμινθεῦ ...

Hear me, god of the silver bow, who stand over Chryse and holy Cylla, and rule mightily over Tenedos, Sminthian god. (transl. Murray)

After this list of toponyms, a geographical interpretation of the epithet appeared acceptable. And then the epithet is mentioned in a direct speech. We know that Aristarchus distinguished very well between narration and speech: what was mentioned in the former was considered the expression of the culture of the narrator—namely Homer, who lived after the Trojan war; what was said by the characters' was considered the expression of the culture of heroic times.<sup>108</sup> Accordingly, σμινθεύς, cited in the speech of the Troadic Chryses, should be more likely read as belonging to his historical context. The same distinction recurs in the relevant fragment of ΠΘ 353 (244 *FGrHist* 353):<sup>109</sup>

καὶ γὰρ εἴ πέρ γε σπανίως ἐπίθετα ἐξενήνοχε ἀπὸ τόπου, οὐδέποτε ἐξ αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἥρωικου προσώπου κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς αὐτὰ λέγει ... Ἐκάβη· “ἀλλ' εὐχεο σύ γ' ἔπειτα κελαϊνεφέϊ Κροίῳ Ἰδαίῳ, ὃς τε Τροίην κατὰ πᾶσαν ὀράται” (Hom. Ω 290–291).

**107** On the πρέπον in Aristarchus, Lehrs 1882, 332–334; Van der Valk 1964, 108–109; Schironi 2018, 458–459, 531, 558–560.

**108** See Schironi 2018, 333–335; Nünlist 2009, 117–118. There are very clear cases in which the heroes of the Homeric poems call Corinth with its ancient name, Ephrya, whereas Homer indicated the city with the current toponym (*Sch. Hom. A*, B 570a1: ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου προσώπου Κόρινθον· ὅταν δὲ ἐξ ἥρωικῶ προσώπῳ περιτιθῇ τὸν λόγον, Ἐφυραν λέγει); or in which his heroes know that the sun sets into the earth, whereas it would set into the ocean according to Homer (*Sch. Hom. A*, Λ 735b1: ὅτι ἐξ ἥρωικου προσώπου ὑπὲρ γῆς τὴν ἀνατολὴν λέγει, αὐτὸς δὲ ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου προσώπου ἐξ ὠκεανῶ). Note the Aristarchan terminology: ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου προσώπου vs. ἐξ ἥρωικου προσώπου, i.e. the Poet is speaking “from his own mouth” or “from that of his heroic characters”.

**109** § 2.2.3.

For (Homer), even if he very rarely mentions epithets derived from places, anyway he does never mention them as narrator, but through a character, and according to verisimilitude ... Hecuba: “Thereafter make thou prayer unto the son of Cronos, lord of the dark clouds, the god of Ida, that looketh down upon all the land of Troy” (*Il.* 24.290–291). (transl. Murray revised)

Thus, in his *ΠΘ*, Apollodorus, though interested in the allegorical interpretations of divine epithets, does not rule out the geographical ones: according to Aristarchus’ categories,<sup>110</sup> they are possible when the epithet is quoted not by the narrator (οὐδέποτε ἐξ αὐτοῦ), but by a heroic character (ἐξ ἥρωικοῦ προσώπου) according to probability (κατὰ τὸ εἰκός). Homeric examples follow, among which Hecabe who invites Priam to pray the Zeus of Mount Ida (*Ω* 290–291), i.e. two Trojan characters praying a Trojan god. Apollodorus may have interpreted *σμινθεύς* in the same way.

This is a first possible reconstruction. One can object that the grammarian, though sharing these categories with his teacher, did not necessarily apply them in the case of *σμινθεύς*. In this respect, a passage in Strabo, dedicated to Troadic geography, deserves attention. In effect, the Geographer was indicated by Jacoby as a witness of *ΠΘ*, albeit the fact that the work is never explicitly quoted.<sup>111</sup> Strabo, who heavily depends on another work of the grammarian, the *Commentary on the Homeric Catalogue of Ships*, may have very likely consulted and drawn excerpts from *ΠΘ*. Further research is still to be done; but this passage attests a list of cult epithets very similar to the list found in Macrobius (§ 2.1.5). Some defend the derivation of *σμινθεύς* from ‘mouse’ (Strab. XIII.1, 64):

παραμυθοῦνται δὲ τὴν ἀπὸ μικρῶν ἐπὶ κλησιν τοιούτοις τισί· καὶ γὰρ ἀπὸ τῶν παρνόπων, οὗς οἱ Οἰταῖοι κόρνοπας λέγουσι, Κορνοπίωνα δὲ τιμᾶσθαι παρ’ αὐτοῖς Ἡρακλέα ἀπαλλαγῆς ἀκρίδων χάριν· Ἰποκτόνον δὲ παρ’ Ἐρυθραίοις τοῖς τὸν Μίμαντα οἰκοῦσιν, ὅτι φθαρτικός τῶν ἀμπελοφάγων ἰπῶν ... Ῥόδιοι δὲ Ἐρυθρίου Ἀπόλλωνος ἔχουσιν ἐν χώρᾳ ἱερὸν, τὴν ἐρυσίβην καλοῦντες ἐρυθρίβην· παρ’ Αἰολεῦσι δὲ τοῖς ἐν Ἀσίᾳ μείζ τις καλεῖται Πορνοπίων, οὕτω τοὺς πάρνοπας καλοῦντων Βοιωτῶν καὶ θυσία συντελεῖται Πορνοπίωνι Ἀπόλλωνι.

Writers excuse this giving of epithets from small creatures by such examples as the following: It is from locusts, they say, which Oetaeans call *kornopes*, that Heracles is worshipped among the Oetaeans as *kornopiōn*, for ridding them from locusts; and he is worshipped among the Erythraeans who live in Mimas as *ipoktonos*, because he is the destroyer of the vine-eating *ips*; and in fact, they add, these are the only Erythraeans in whose country this creature is not to be found. And the Rhodians, who call *erysibē erythibē*, have a temple of Apollo *erythibios* in their country; and among the Aeolians in Asia a certain month is called

110 See fn. 108.

111 244 *FGrHist* 99b; 99f.



*Pornopiōn*, since the Boeotians so call the locusts, and a sacrifice is offered to Apollo *pornopiōn*. (transl. Jones)

Some scholars accept that divine epithets could derive from things of little matter (ἀπὸ μικρῶν). The Oetaeans, for instance, worship Heracles κορνοπίων, deriving his name from the locusts—κόρνοπες in their dialect; the hero should help them by keeping the locusts away. Heracles is called ἱποκτόνος by the Erythraeans of Asia Minor, i.e. 'killer of woodworms' which destroy the grapevines. Apollo, as the averter of rust, is called ἐρυθίβιος by the Rhodians. The same god is also called πορνοπίων as he keeps the locusts away.

This list clearly shows that gods did receive epithets from humble yet harmful things. Therefore, it became acceptable to derive σμινθεύς from σμίνθος. If the passage comes from ΠΘ, it means that Apollodorus was aware of Aristarchus' objections against this etymology;<sup>112</sup> at the same time, the epithets related to local cults in the list prompted him to overcome such objections.

If this reconstruction is correct, Apollonius' entry mentioned above may preserve another part of this list. Apollonius' lexicon indeed includes ΠΘ among its sources.<sup>113</sup> We are also told about a festival in Rhodes, the *Smintheia*, where Apollo and Dionysus were praised for having kept mice away: καὶ ἐν Ῥόδῳ Σμίνθεια ἑορτή, ὅτι τῶν μυῶν ποτε λυμαινομένων τὸν καρπὸν τῶν ἀμπελώνων Ἀπόλλων καὶ Διόνυσος διέφθειραν τοὺς μύας. This part is closely similar to what we read in Strabo: it may have been drawn from the same list preserved by the Geographer. Accordingly, I distinguish the sources in this way:

Aristarchus | Apion | Apollodorus' ΠΘ | Aristarchus

ἐπίθετον Ἀπόλλωνος· κατὰ τὸν Ἀρίσταρχον ἀπὸ πόλεως Τρωικῆς Σμίνθης καλουμένης. | ὁ δὲ Ἀπίων ἀπὸ τῶν μυῶν, οἱ σμίνθιοι καλοῦνται. | καὶ ἐν Ῥόδῳ Σμίνθεια ἑορτή, ὅτι τῶν μυῶν ποτε λυμαινομένων τὸν καρπὸν τῶν ἀμπελώνων Ἀπόλλων καὶ Διόνυσος διέφθειραν τοὺς μύας. | ἄλλ' Ἀρίσταρχος ἀπρεπὲς ἡγεῖται ἀπὸ χαμαιπετοῦς ζώου τὸν θεὸν ἐπιθέτω κομείσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ ποιητοῦ. (translation: see above).

In sum: Apollodorus may have interpreted σμινθεύς geographically, as Aristarchus did. Yet, if Strab. XIII.1, 64 is drawn from ΠΘ, we may also sustain that Apollodorus neglected his teacher's objections and accepted the traditional explanation of the epithet. In both cases, the—idiosyncratic—solar interpretation

<sup>112</sup> Apollodorus mentioned his teacher also at the time of composition of ΠΘ: the name of Aristarchus emerges in the important ΠΘ fragment 244 *FGrHist* 353 (Poseidon ἐλικώνιος).

<sup>113</sup> Henrichs 1975, 28 fn. 129–130.

we find in Macrobius ('he who runs boiling') is to be considered a Neoplatonic invention.

### 3 Scientific and ideological approach and results

In Apollodorus' ΠΘ, etymology seems to behave 'scientifically'—in the sense explained above (p. 163): there are some predetermined 'rules' along which it is acceptable to move and to reach results. According to Apollodorus, among these rules stood out the supremacy of Homer in theological matters, mostly explained following the Aristarchan—i.e. internal—method.

Generally, Apollo νόμιος was considered the god of pastures; in the same way it was interpreted by post-Homeric literature—which was probably cited, albeit not emerging from ΠΘ *testimonia*—and the local cults—the list preserved by Porphyry. This is accepted by Apollodorus for it is confirmed by Homer: not directly, since the epithet itself is absent, but through some myths which narrate about Apollo serving as a shepherd at the palace of Admetus and Laomedon.<sup>114</sup> The Poet also provided Apollodorus with a hint to introduce new elements in order to interpret the epithet: he attests that the plague originates from animals; this enables Apollodorus to take the process a step forward, affirming that Apollo νόμιος has a connection with the plague. Therefore, by protecting animals, the god will protect humankind too; or, because of divine ambiguity, he can send the plague by means of the animals themselves.

The case of λύκιος and λυκηγενής is different: probably, Apollodorus embraced the suggestion, offered by Cleanthes and Antipater of Tarsus, to interpret the epithets in a solar way but only once such an interpretation was demonstrated through Homer: this led him towards a different explanation than theirs. The grammarian ignored the common form λύκιος, which was unknown to the Poet, while considering the Homeric one, λυκηγενής. The latter was interpreted within the *Wortschatz* provided by the Poet himself: ἀμφιλύκη, the epithet of the Night, allowed Apollodorus to postulate the term λύκη; this, in turn, explained λυκηγενής ('he who generates the λύκη'); λύκιος was considered a shortened form of the Homeric term. The epithet of the Dawn, ἡριγένεια, offered a semantic and formal parallel. It must be said that the solar interpretation of these epithets was far from being granted: the usual interpretations derived them from Lycia or from wolves; Apollodorus and the Stoics were a minority, by and large. Yet what sustained the

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<sup>114</sup> It is noteworthy that the Homeric myths are interpreted literally, not allegorically.

grammarian in supporting this argumentation was the fact that it was supported, in his eyes, by Homer.

Apollodorus' interpretations are not faithfully reported by his *testimonia*. Cornutus does not attach so much importance to Homer: accordingly, he does not accept the connection between Apollo νόμιος and the plague, nor the solar interpretation of λύκιος; λυκηγενής is not even mentioned. The post-Homeric λυκοκτόνος, rejected by Apollodorus, is accepted alongside λύκιος. In Cornutus' view, all these epithets were pastoral—or became such again.

In his turn, Porphyry greatly venerated Homer, to whom he dedicated his learned *Questions*. This does not mean that he would accept Apollodorus' entire methodology and views. Other necessities urged the philosopher: Porphyry was seeking a unique and supreme god, who reigned within the sphere of matter, image of the superior, intellectual νοῦς, and claimed to have found it in the sun worshipped in most human religions.<sup>115</sup> The material of ΠΘ, mostly divine epithets, had to serve this purpose.

How did Porphyry put to use this material? Epithets already solar in Apollodorus were welcome. This is clearly the case of λυκηγενής (§ 2.2.2), where the philosopher, though not fully understanding the methodology of his source and neglecting some other parts, preserves most of Apollodorus' treatment of the epithet as well as its *auctores*. In this scenario, Porphyry introduced his own additions, for instance the Egyptian association between the wolf and the sun.

In the case of νόμιος, the pastoral interpretation emerging both from Homer and later authors did not satisfy him: in his eyes, the god had to be a solar one, and this was demonstrated by interpreting his pastoral function allegorically (the sun as shepherd and nurturer).<sup>116</sup> This also happened with πατρώος (§ 1.3), which Apollodorus referred to an Athenian cult. The association of the epithet of such

<sup>115</sup> See Flamant 1977, 670; Plotinus (*Enn.* IV 3, 11) not only draws an analogical relation between the sun and the νοῦς, the second metaphysical hypostasis (ἦν δὴ νοῦς ἐκεῖνος ὁ ἐκεῖ ἥλιος—οὗτος γὰρ ἡμῖν γινέσθω παράδειγμα τοῦ λόγου), but also posits the sun as an intermediary between the universal Soul—the third hypostasis—and the matter (δίδωσι δὲ αὐτῇ τὰ πέρατα αὐτῆς τὰ πρὸς τοῦτον τὸν ἥλιον τούτῳ τῷ ἡλίῳ); on this Plotinian passage, see Van Nuffelen 2016, 134–135. Thus, Plotinus may have given Porphyry the idea of the superiority of the sun and its parallelism with the Intellect. This is possible; the latter, however, may have also opposed, to the world of matter, a generic noetic dimension without clarifying it; see how metaphysics is dealt with in the *Letter to Marcella*: see Smith 2007, 11–12. Unfortunately, Porphyrian metaphysics is attested in a fragmentary and problematic way: see Smith 1987, 737–741; Dillon 1992.

<sup>116</sup> This allowed Porphyry to preserve some erudite information of a pastoral nature found in Apollodorus (the list of Apollinian epithets in the Aegean area) and to turn it in solar direction. The modern reader can observe, in the same material, the two different interpretations overlapping.

an universal god as the sun with a provincial dimension may have shocked Porphyry; the word itself, however, allowed margin for an allegorical move: from being father of the Ionians, Apollo became, as the sun, father to all mankind.

With respect to these epithets, some witnesses may come to our aid. The countless epithets present in the ‘solar theology’, however, often lack such witnesses, thus preventing comparison; in these cases, we stand alone before Porphyry’s version. This is the case of *σμινθεύς* (§ 2.3), where we can only guess the range of Apollodorus’ interpretation by considering his approach (probably, he either intended it geographically or applied the traditional etymology through *σμίνθος*, ‘mouse’). In his turn, Porphyry tried very hard to devise a solar interpretation for the epithet; the result can appear odd (‘he who runs boiling’), but it was what the sound sequence of the word allowed if put into conversation with the idea of the sun. In sum: what was already solar in *ΠΘ* was readily accepted by the philosopher; but even what was not had to become solar in some way.

There is a five-hundred-year span between Apollodorus’ *ΠΘ* and Porphyry. Nonetheless, the latter’s ‘allegorical’ works share some features with *ΠΘ*: careful attention to etymology, iconography and rituals. Porphyry read *ΠΘ* passionately: in his eyes, the work opened a window into the divine. This was not by chance: both men were attempting to grasp and define the divine; both moved within the complexity of human cultures. They differed in methodology only—as Porphyry was not subject to Aristarchan rigour—and in the definition of this divine. According to Porphyry, all gods were aspects of the solar god, and this had to be revealed through their names and epithets. Apollodorus, who was not affected by heliolatry, believed that a solar interpretation was only possible after the ‘scientific’ observation of evidence, i.e. what was indicated by his main authority, that is Homer, correctly interpreted.

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## Part IV: Etymology and Word-Plays



Valentin Decloquement

# Fallacious Etymology and Puns: Ptolemy Chennus' Sham *Homeric Questions*

## 1 Introduction

Codex 190 of Photius' *Bibliotheca* contains the summary of a lost work, a miscellany of strange anecdotes and fanciful tales whose labyrinthine structure cannot fail to overwhelm the reader. The author of this book is a certain Ptolemy who was given, for some obscure reason, the nickname of Χέννος, 'the Quail'.<sup>1</sup> He lived at the end of the first century and at the beginning of the second century CE; according to the *Suda*, he worked in Alexandria during the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian.<sup>2</sup> If we trust Photius' testimony, this work was dedicated to a Tertulla, whose Roman sounding name may prove that this Ptolemy 'the Quail' was one of the Greeks with close ties to the Roman elite.<sup>3</sup> His treatise is known under two titles: the *Paradoxical Inquiry* (Παράδοξος Ἱστορία) and the *Original Inquiry* (Καινὴ Ἱστορία),<sup>4</sup> in seven books.<sup>5</sup> This is the only extant work written by Ptolemy, but according to the medieval

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1 For discussion, see Bowersock 1994, 24; Pizzone 2014, 179.

2 *Suda*, π, 3037, s. v. Πτολεμαῖος: "Ptolemaeus, Alexandrian, grammarian, son of Hephaestion, who lived under the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian, called the Quail." (Πτολεμαῖος Ἀλεξανδρεὺς, γραμματικὸς, ὁ τοῦ Ἡφαιστίωνος, γεγονώς ἐπὶ τε Τραϊανοῦ καὶ Ἀδριανοῦ τῶν Αὐτοκρατόρων, προσαγορευθεὶς δὲ Χέννος.) However, it is not impossible that this Alexandrian origin is an extrapolation due to the content of the *Original Inquiry*, in which Ptolemy the Quail counterfeits the Alexandrian γραμματικός.

3 Photius, *Library*, 190, 146b9–12. See Bowersock 1994, 26–27. The dedication also echoes the prominent role of women in the treatise and the novelistic prologues of the 1st–2nd centuries: Hose 2008, 181; Ní Mheallaigh 2014, 118. For further discussion, see Hartley 2014, 66–70.

4 Photius speaks of Καινὴ Ἱστορία; the title Περί παραδόξου ἱστορίας is given by the *Suda*, π 3037, s. v. Πτολεμαῖος. Scholars usually translate ἱστορία by 'history', but, following Hartley (2014, 54–66) (who includes εἰς πολυμαθίαν, 'intended for polymathy' in the title), I think it is preferable to understand the word as an 'inquiry' in the Herodotean sense: indeed, the treatise contains a whole intellectual exploration. As for καινός, it corresponds to the idea of novelty in the strict—and maybe pejorative?—sense of the word. The reader has consequently to deal with a work whose content is unexpected, original; this sense is very close to the rhetorical meaning of παράδοξος: as the paradoxical encomium, the aim of the treatise is to support the untenable. See Chatzís 1914, XXXIV–XXXVII; Delattre 2013, 195 and 197; Ní Mheallaigh 2014, 117.

5 Photius, *Library*, 190, 146a41–2.

sources he seems to have composed others, among which is a poem entitled *Anti-Homer* in twenty four books.<sup>6</sup>

The status of the *Original Inquiry* has been discussed for a century and half, and the debates provide a good synthesis of the problems to which the notion of the ludic has given rise. By considering Ptolemy as a pedant, singularly lacking in taste, Rudolf Hercher (1856) brought him into disrepute which has remained until now.<sup>7</sup> Against Hercher, Anton Chatzís (1914) tried to demonstrate that Ptolemy the Quail was a true scholar, grammarian and philosopher; however, his study is totally reliant on the Byzantine and Arabic sources, which he treats uncritically.<sup>8</sup> Beyond their antagonism, it is impossible not to be struck by the fact that these two studies are based on the same presupposition: the game, since it is a game, must not be considered as something serious and is not worthy of credit; as a matter of fact, in order to justify the aim of the *Original Inquiry*, Chatzís felt bound to obliterate its playfulness. However, since the effort of more recent scholars to enhance the status of games in the second half the twentieth century, the debate has reached a turning point:<sup>9</sup> for instance, in his recent study, Charles Delattre (2013) takes playfulness fully into account.<sup>10</sup> My approach in the present paper will be openly ‘ludological’, and I will start by a simple observation: even if it is very hard to find precise correspondences between the content of this *Inquiry* and other ancient sources, the author’s intellectual tools are in complete accordance with the patterns current in his time. More precisely, my aim will be

6 Suda, π, 3037, s. v. Πτολεμαῖος: “He has written: *The Paradoxical Inquiry*, the *Sphinx*—which is an historical drama—, an *Anti-Homer*—which is a poem in twenty-four books—, and other works” (Περὶ παραδόξου ἱστορίας. Σφίγξα. δράμα δὲ ἐστὶν ἱστορικόν. Ἀνθόμνηρον. ἔστι δὲ ποιητικὴ ῥαψωδιῶν κδ’. καὶ ἄλλα τινά). On these different texts, see Chatzís 1914, XVIII–XXI; Hartley 2014, 15–18. According to some sources, Ptolemy also wrote a *Life of Aristotle* and peripatetic treatises: see Chatzís 1914, XXII–XXV, and his recension of all the Greek and Arabic fragments, pp. 3–6; see Overwien 2014 for further analysis.

7 In particular, see Cameron 2004, 134–159; Hercher 1856, 9–12. Several scholars agree that Cameron’s analysis is reliant on a whole university tradition that have dismissed Ptolemy’s playfulness: Dowden 2009, 159; Delattre 2013, 194; Hartley 2014, 33–34.

8 Chatzís 1914, IX: “Daß Ptolemaios Grammatiker war, sagt uns Suidas ausdrücklich und wird durch seine Schriftstellerei bestätigt. Daß er auch Philosoph war, haben wir erst in der jüngsten Zeit erfahren, und zwar aus einer nichtgriechischen Quelle.”

9 The work of Huizinga (1951) has been highly influential in the genesis of an anthropology of the game. After him, using a structuralist approach, scholars tried to define more specifically what playfulness is, as, for example, in the case of Henriot 1969.

10 See also Abenstein 2018, 189–192; Djurslev 2018, 544–546; Ní Mheallaigh 2014, 116–126. Due to the playfulness of Ptolemy’s treatise, the consensus in the recent studies is that the mythographical data preserved in Photius’ summary should be treated with caution: Ibáñez Chacón 2017, 107–108.

to read the *Original Inquiry* through its own intellectual context, by comparing it to other contemporary technical texts, but also to Byzantine sources, in order to understand the *gap* introduced by Ptolemy between discursive tools that were consensual and a result which disturbs that consensus. Of course, such an approach is based on the presupposition that Ptolemy the Quail was a πεπαιδευμένος: on this point, I believe we can trust the Byzantine sources according to which the author was a γραμματικός joined to the intellectual elite of his time.<sup>11</sup>

Etymology is one of the principal tools used in the *Original Inquiry*. In the appendix, I propose an exhaustive typology of the etymological devices we can find in the treatise.<sup>12</sup> Unsurprisingly, the most frequent case is the change from a proper noun to a common noun and from a common noun to a proper noun. In some anecdotes we find the pattern of the etiological myth, as in the story of the psalacantha (Type 1.2.2), and in others we find the myth of the πρώτος εὑρετής who gives his name to the artefact he has created (Type 1.2.1). However, Ptolemy takes his use of etymology to the extreme. For instance, the tale according to which Alexander's father was named Snake (Type 1.3) is the mirror of the story of Eupompos, who had a snake-son named Snake (Type 2).<sup>13</sup> The most extreme case is to be found in book 5; here, Ptolemy crafts a whole etymological alphabet in which the succession of different anecdotes is based entirely on the internal coherence of the text (Type 5.2): Moses was named Alpha because he had eczema (ἀλφός); Galerius Crassus was called Beta because he loved a beet named *betacium*, and so on.

<sup>11</sup> Besides Photius' indications and the article dedicated by the *Suda* to Ptolemy, we can quote the *Suda*, ε, 2004, s. v. Ἐπαφροδίτος: the grammarian Epaphroditos "distinguished himself from Nero to Nerva, and at that time there was also Ptolemy the son of Hephaestion and many others renowned for their παιδεία." (διέπρεψεν ἐπὶ Νέρωνος καὶ μέχρι Νέρβα, καθ' ὃν χρόνον καὶ Πτολεμαῖος ὁ Ἡφαιστίωνος ἦν καὶ ἄλλοι συχνοὶ τῶν ὀνομαστῶν ἐν παιδείᾳ).

<sup>12</sup> Also see the typology proposed by Tomberg 1968, 95–99. The latter distinguishes between four cases: (a) a name shedding light on a tale or a tale shedding light on a name; (b) a word used as a proper noun; (c) a letter used as a proper noun; (d) a play on similarities in the meaning, but with different words and nouns.

<sup>13</sup> If we trust Photius' account, these two extracts were not distant the one from the other in the economy of the *Original Inquiry*: both of them were to be found in the third book of the treatise.

The four cases I will deal with in the present paper are based on an interaction between etymological and exegetical practice.<sup>14</sup> All have in common the parody of the art of Homeric questions.<sup>15</sup> On the model of the work undertaken in the great Hellenistic libraries, it had become common practice to investigate the problems posed by archaic poetry. The Homeric questions followed a precise pattern: the author had first to define a problem (ζήτημα) and then to propose a solution to it (λύσις).<sup>16</sup> In the *Inquiry*, the etymological argument is used to solve Homeric problems fallaciously. It has often been argued in various ways that Ptolemy's text is a clever entertainment destined to test the readership's knowledge and ability to discern the authentic from the fake.<sup>17</sup> I would like to take a step further and show that the *Inquiry* is polemical in that it disturbs the consensus and has a critical eye on its author's own cultural background.

## 2 What is the meaning of ἐξ ἁλός in Tiresias' prophecy (*Odyssey*, 11.134)?

The first extract I will deal with tells of Odysseus' death. According to the *Original Inquiry*, he was metamorphosed into a horse by a female poisoner in the service of Circe<sup>18</sup>:

ονομασθῆναι δὲ ἀπὸ Ἁλὸς Τυρρηνῆς φαρμακίδος, ἣ Κίρκης θεραπείαινα γενομένη διέδρα τῆς δεσποίνης. Πρὸς ταύτην δέ φησι παραγενόμενον τὸν Ὀδυσσεῦ εἰς ἵππον μετέβαλε τοῖς φαρμάκοις καὶ ἔτρεφε παρ' ἐαυτῇ ἕως γηράσας ἐτελεύτησεν. Ἐκ ταύτης τῆς ἱστορίας λύεται καὶ τὸ παρ' Ὅμηρῳ ἀπορούμενον· θάνατος δέ τοι ἐξ ἁλὸς αὐτῶ.

*Sea* was the name of a Tyrrhenian poisoner who, after having been Circe's maidservant, fled from her mistress. When Odysseus arrived to her, Ptolemy says that he was metamorphosed into a horse by the effect of her poison, and was kept by her until he died of old age. From

<sup>14</sup> Delattre (2013) has brilliantly shown that exegetical practice and construction of fiction are joined in the *Original Inquiry*, although the fictional pact is more usually assumed to be opposed to the metatext, in that the latter implies a pact that is anti-fictional. In the present paper, I will try to pursue this kind of investigation by dealing with the parody of Homeric questions on the base on etiologic tales in which the etymological device is used.

<sup>15</sup> For an introduction on the place of Homer in the *Original Inquiry*, see especially Hartley 2014, 148–190; also Grossardt 2006, 62–65; Hercher 1856, 11–13; Kim 2010, 18–20.

<sup>16</sup> Novokhatko 2015, 47–54.

<sup>17</sup> Abenstein 2018, 190; Cameron 2004, 135; Djurslev 2018, 545; Hartley 2014, 9–10 and 34–35; Hose 2008, 186–189; Ní Mheallaigh 2014, 119–120.

<sup>18</sup> Except where mentioned, all the translations are mine.

this information is solved the problem we find in Homer: *Death will come to you from the sea* [Od. 11.134].<sup>19</sup>

This version of Odysseus' death is attested nowhere except in the *Original Inquiry*. Its content is based on two episodes of the Epic Cycle: on the one hand, the transformation of Odysseus' companions into pigs;<sup>20</sup> on the other hand, the narrative of the *Telegonia*, in which Odysseus' death is an indirect consequence of his meeting with Circe.

Ptolemy's alternative *Telegonia* is a playful appropriation of an exegetical problem posed by a line of the *Odyssey*, and proposes an alternative etymology for the word ἄλός. When Odysseus goes to the Underworld in book 11, Tiresias makes the following revelation:

θάνατος δέ τοι ἐξ ἁλὸς αὐτῷ | ἀβληχρὸς μάλα τοῖος ἐλεύσεται, ὅς κέ σε πέφνηι | γήραι ὕπο  
λιπαρῷ ἀρημένον.

Your own death will come [away] from the sea, a death as gentle as these words: it will take you in the weakness of a rich old age.<sup>21</sup>

The expression ἐξ ἁλός, line 134, was given two distinct interpretations. In a local sense, ἐξ simply indicates distance (“*Death will come to you far away from the sea*”): it can be read as the adjective ἑξαλος in one single word. On the contrary, in a causal sense, the same preposition expresses the origin (“*Death will come to you because of the sea, from the sea*”). This is a problem which still bothers the scholars today,<sup>22</sup> and ancient readers already faced it as is shown by the scholia HQ to Od. 11.134:<sup>23</sup>

τὸ ἑξαλος ὡς ἔκβιος, οἷον ἡπειρωτικός καὶ οὐ θαλάσσιος. ἔνιοι δὲ κατὰ παράθεσιν, ἐξ ἁλός,  
οἷον ἀπὸ θαλάσσης, ὡς τὸ ἐπισσεύη μέγα δαίμων ἐξ ἁλός.

<sup>19</sup> Photius, *Library*, 190, 150a12–19.

<sup>20</sup> Homer, *Odyssey*, 9.274–320.

<sup>21</sup> Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.134–136. Translation by Hammond.

<sup>22</sup> West 2013, 307–315.

<sup>23</sup> The subversion of exegetical practice in this extract has already been lightened by Kim 2010, 19, who speaks of “absurd solutions to classic Homeric ‘problems’”; see also Hartley 2014, 154–155; Tomberg 1968, 110–111. My analysis intends to corroborate these hypotheses and complete them by quotations from the scholia and Eustathius.

The expression ‘*far away from the sea*’ is like ‘deprived of life’, which is ‘on dry land’ and not ‘marine’. However, some [interpret it] in a local sense, which is ‘*from the sea*’, like in the line “*may a great divinity put in motion from the sea...*” [Od. 5.421–2]

The solution of this problem triggers another problem: what knowledge might Homer have had of the Epic Cycle? If the poet alludes to a tale in which Odysseus is not killed by something coming from the sea, it is necessary to give a causal sense to ἐξ. On the contrary, if he does not know this tale, ἐξ necessarily has a local sense. The following text from Eustathius’ commentary is a good illustration of this problem:

θάνατος δὲ ἔξαλος ὁ ἡπειρωτικός καὶ ἔξω θαλάσσης, ἵνα λέγῃ ὅτι εἰ καὶ δυστυχεῖς ὦ Ὀδυσσεύ κατὰ θάλασσαν, ἀλλ’ ὁ θάνατός σοι οὐκ ἐν αὐτῇ ἔσται ἀλλ’ ἔξω αὐτῆς. τινὲς δὲ ἐξ ἁλός γράφουσι κατὰ παράθεσιν ἐν διοὶ μέρεσι λόγου, λέγοντες ὡς Τηλέγονος ὁ Κίρκης καὶ Ὀδυσσεώς ἡφαιστότευκτον δόρυ ἔχων οὗ ἀδαμαντίνη μὲν ἡ ἐπιδορατὶς, αἰχμὴ δὲ κέντρον θαλαττίας τρυγόνος, χρυσοῦς δὲ ὁ στύραξ.

The death ἔξαλος is to be understood as ‘on the continent’ and ‘far away from the sea’, so that [Tiresias] says: “even if you are unfortunate on the sea, Odysseus, death will not come from it but far away from it.” Nonetheless, some write ἐξ ἁλός by juxtaposing two distinct words, saying that Telegonos, the son of Circe and Odysseus, had a spear forged by Hephaistos, whose extremity was of steel, whose point was made of the sting of a marine stingray and whose spike was of gold.<sup>24</sup>

There was however no unanimity about it:

ἐξ ἁλός: ἔξω τῆς ἁλός. οὐ γὰρ οἶδεν ὁ ποιητὴς τὰ κατὰ τὸν Τηλέγονον καὶ τὰ κατὰ τὸ κέντρον τῆς τρυγόνος.

ἐξ ἁλός: to be understood as ‘far away from the sea’, for the poet does not know the tale linked to Telegonos and to the sting of the stingray.<sup>25</sup>

The stingray (τρύξ) mentioned in the two previous texts is the marine element of Telegonos’ spear: it is a fish whose poison covers the tip of its spike.<sup>26</sup> If we believe that Homer alludes to this tale, Tiresias’ prophecy means that, in fact, Odysseus, killed by the spike of this spear, will have received death from the sea.

It is this kind of debate that Ptolemy parodies. In his demonstration, we can find all the ingredients of the ζήτημα: the formulation of a semantic problem—

<sup>24</sup> Eustathius, *Commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam* 9.133, vol. 1, p. 404, l. 23–27.

<sup>25</sup> Scholium Q *Od.* 11.134.

<sup>26</sup> For a complete summary of the versions of Odysseus’ old age and death, see Gantz 2004, 1247–1252.



what is the meaning of ἐξ ἁλός—and its solution (λύεται) based on a tale (ἐκ ταύτης τῆς ἱστορίας). Nevertheless, this solution is a playful reversal, consisting in transferring the problem on to the sense one must give to ἁλός, and not to ἐξ as the commentators do. The making of an alternative etymology guarantees the internal coherence of this fallacious argument, based on the passage from a common noun (the sea) to a proper noun (a poisoner called Sea).

### 3 Why does Achilles have the epithet ποδάρκης?

The second case in which etymology, punning and Homeric commentary intervene is different from the first for two main reasons. On the one hand, Ptolemy clearly exhibits the etymological practice that underlies his sham demonstration. On the other hand, he does not refer to a preexisting interpretative problem, but completely invents one, that is: why is Achilles given the epithet ποδάρκης, ‘swift-footed’? It is attested twenty-one times in the *Iliad* and has no particular meaning besides the fact that it designates the hero’s agility,<sup>27</sup> as shown by Eustathius’ commentary to its first occurrence:

ποδωκεία μέντοι πάντων ὁ Ἀχιλλεὺς προεῖχε καὶ ποσὶν οὐκ ἦν ἐρίσαι αὐτῷ, ὡς ἀλλαχοῦ ὁ ποιητὴς λέγει. διὸ συχνὰ ποδώκη τε αὐτὸν καλεῖ καὶ διαλελυμένως πόδας ὠκύν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ποδάρκη, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐπαρκοῦντα ἢ ἐξαρκοῦντα τοῖς ποσὶ καὶ ἐπὶ πολὺ θέειν δυνάμενον, ὅπερ ἐπίτασις ἐστὶ ποδωκείας, ὡς ἄλλο ὃν τὸ ποδώκη τίνα εἶναι ἢ ποδάρκη. οὐ γὰρ πᾶς ποδώκης ἤδη καὶ ποδάρκης, εἰ μὴ καὶ τοῖς ποσὶν ἐπαρκῶν ἀντέχει καὶ θέει ἀκάματα.

Achilles surpassed everyone in agility and it was not possible to compete with him as for the feet, as the poet says elsewhere.<sup>28</sup> That is why he frequently calls him ποδώκης<sup>29</sup> and in two words πόδας ὠκὺς<sup>30</sup>, but also ποδάρκης, which means being sufficiently strong or self-reliant in his feet, and who is able to run for a long time, which corresponds to an extreme

<sup>27</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, 1.121; 2.688; 6.423; 9.599; 16.5; 18.181; 20.177; 20.413; 20.445; 21.49; 21.149; 21.265; 22.376; 23.140; 23.193; 23.333; 23.534; 23.555; 23.828; 23.889; 24.668.

<sup>28</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, 23.791–792.

<sup>29</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, 2.860; 2.874; 8.474; 16.165; 16.281; 16.865; 17.388; 17.486; 18.234; 18.261; 18.267; 20.27; 20.45; 20.89; 22.193; 23.28; 23.35; 23.249; 23.793; 24.458; *Odyssey*, 9.471; 9.538.

<sup>30</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, 1.58; 1.84; 1.148; 1.215; 1.364; 1.489; 9.196; 9.307; 9.606; 9.643; 11.112; 11.607; 16.48; 18.78; 18.97; 18.187; 19.55; 19.145; 19.198; 22.260; 22.344; 23.93; 23.776; 24.138; 24.559; 24.751.

degree of swiftness of foot, since for someone to be ποδώκης is different from someone being ποδάρκης. Indeed, not everybody ποδώκης is also ποδάρκης unless by being sufficiently strong of foot he resists for a long time and runs tirelessly.<sup>31</sup>

We find exactly the same information in the scholia bT to the same Iliadic extract:

ποδάρκης: ὁ ἑαυτῷ τοῖς ποσὶν ἐπαρκῶν, ἢ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὡς τὸ λαοσσόος.

ποδάρκης: [The word means] the one who is sufficiently strong by his feet for himself or even for the others, as in the adjective λαοσσόος<sup>32</sup> [*‘the one who helps the others in the fighting’*].<sup>33</sup>

Once we have the consensual reading of this epithet in mind, we can better understand exactly how eccentric the content of the *Original Inquiry* was with respect to its intellectual background. Ptolemy makes up a Homeric question which is not one from start to finish, and he solves it with an alternative etymology, denying the obvious:

φασὶ δὲ ποδάρκην αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ ποιητοῦ λέγεσθαι ὅτι φασὶ τῆς Ἄρκης τὰ πτερὰ τὴν Θέτιν περιθεῖναι τῷ παιδί γενηθέντι, καὶ εἶναι τὸ ποδάρκης ὁ ἐν τοῖς ποσὶ τὰ τῆς Ἄρκης πτερὰ ἔχων. Ἡ δ' Ἄρκη Θαύμαντος ἦν θυγάτηρ, ἥς ἡ ἀδελφὴ Ἴρις· πτερὰ δ' εἶχεν ἑκατέρω. Ἐν δὲ τῷ πρὸς Τιτᾶνας τῶν θεῶν πολέμῳ ἀποπτᾶσα τῶν θεῶν ἡ Ἄρκη πρὸς τοὺς Τιτᾶνας ἦλθε. Μετὰ δὲ τὴν νίκην, ὁ Ζεὺς τὰ μὲν πτερὰ αὐτῆς ἀφείλετο, αὐτὴν ταρταρώσας, παραγενόμενος δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ Πηλέως καὶ Θέτιδος γάμῳ δῶρον τὰ πτερὰ τῇ Θέτιδι προσάγει.

They say that he [Achilles] was called ποδάρκης by the poet because, as they say, Thetis put Arke's wings on her new-born son, and the word ποδάρκης means the one who has Arke's wings on his feet. As for Arke, she was the daughter of Thaumatas and Iris was her sister; both of them had wings. But during the war of the gods against the Titans, after having flown away from the gods, Arke came to the Titans. After the victory, Zeus deprived her of her wings and threw her into Tartarus; when he went to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, he gave the wings to Thetis as a gift.<sup>34</sup>

There is no other extant occurrence of this story; even the name of this goddess, Arke, is not attested elsewhere: it is therefore possible to imagine that all of this is a specific invention of Ptolemy. However, the story does not come out of nowhere. In fact, Ptolemy reuses different elements from the tradition into which he

<sup>31</sup> Eustathius, *Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem* 1.121, vol. 1, p. 102, l. 21 – p. 103, l. 27.

<sup>32</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, 13.128; 17.398; 20.48; 20.79; *Odyssey*, 15.244; 22.210.

<sup>33</sup> Scholia bT II. 1.121.

<sup>34</sup> Photius, *Library*, 190, 152a12–22. For further analysis of this passage, see Hartley 2014, 176–178.

inserts his new goddess: the Titanomachy,<sup>35</sup> and also the wedding of Thetis, which is the first episode of the Epic Cycle and during which the couple receives different gifts from the other gods.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, the family ties with Iris justify the fact that Arke too has wings on her feet.

## 4 Why, after having been called Οὔτις, did Odysseus receive the name Ὀδυσσεύς?

In the third case I will deal with, we successively find two etymologies explaining why Odysseus was first named Οὔτις, and after that Ὀδυσσεύς:

Ὀδυσσεύς, διότι ὦτα μεγάλα εἶχεν, Οὔτις πρότερον ἐκαλεῖτο· ὑετοῦ δέ φησι γενομένου μὴ ἀντισχοῦσαν τὴν μητέρα ἔγκυνον οὔσαν κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν τεκεῖν, καὶ τὸν Ὀδυσσεά διὰ τοῦτο οὕτως ὀνομασθῆναι.

Odysseus, because he had big ears (ὦτα), was first named Οὔτις; but Ptolemy says that, when it started to rain, his pregnant mother, unable to wait, gave birth on the road (κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν), and that is why he was thus named Ὀδυσσεύς.<sup>37</sup>

As for Οὔτις, the pun consists in associating the sound of Οὔτις to the one of ὦτα. By contradicting the episode of the Cyclops in *Odyssey*, 9,<sup>38</sup> Ptolemy crafts a fantasist etiology and as such an alternative version to the Homeric poem, which may be compared to Homeric rewritings such as those by the great figures of the Second Sophistic—Dio of Prusa, Lucian and Philostratos.

The second etymology is also an alternative contradicting the *Odyssey*. Here, the *Original Inquiry* targets the episode when Eurycleia recognizes Odysseus.<sup>39</sup> In this extract, the poet gives the etymology of his hero: Autolycos, Odysseus'

<sup>35</sup> For a recension and a classification of the sources about the Titanomachie, see Gantz 2004, 85–97.

<sup>36</sup> On the tradition of Thetis' and Peleus' wedding, see Gantz 2004, 402–403.

<sup>37</sup> Photius, *Library*, 190, 147a10–13. See also Hartley 2014, 155.

<sup>38</sup> Homer, *Odyssey*, 9.365–370 and 408–414. Eustathius says that the Homeric pun has been imitated by the earlier poets: see Eustathius, *Commentarii ad Homerī Odysseam* 9.366, vol. 1, p. 348, l. 21–22. It is not impossible that Ptolemy echoes a whole tradition of reuse, which would signify that, here, there is not a simple intertextual relationship between the *Original Inquiry* and the *Odyssey*. See also Hercher 1856, 14 n. 9.

<sup>39</sup> Homer, *Odyssey*, 19.399–409.

grandfather, decided that the child would be named Ὀδυσσεύς because he quarreled with many men (ὀδύσασθαι) when he came to Ithaca:

γαμβρὸς ἐμὸς θυγάτηρ τε, τίθεσθ' ὄνομ' ὅττι κεν εἴπω· πολλοῖσιν γὰρ ἐγὼ γε ὀδυσσάμενος  
τόδ' ἰκάνω, | ἀνδράσιν ἡδὲ γυναιξὶν ἀνὰ χθόνα πουλυβότειραν· | τῷ δ' Ὀδυσσεύς ὄνομ' ἔστω  
ἐπώνυμον

My daughter and son-in-law, give him the name I tell you now. You see in me here a man who has often been at odds with and issue with men and women (ὀδυσσάμενος) all over the nourishing earth: so let his name be Odysseus to reflect that.<sup>40</sup>

If we read the ancient commentaries to this extract, the scholia and Eustathius notice that the Homeric version is not the only one:<sup>41</sup>

Σιληνὸς μέντοι ὁ Χίος κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν ἐν δευτέρῳ βιβλίῳ τῶν αὐτῶν μυθικῶν δασύνει παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν, λέγων ὡς Ἀντικλείας ὀδευούσης παρὰ τὸ Νήριτον, ὕσεν ὁ Ζεὺς. τὴν δὲ ὑπὸ ἀγωνίας ἐκεῖ πεσοῦσαν τεκεῖν. καὶ τὸ γεννηθὲν κληθῆναι Ὀδυσσεά παρὰ τὸ ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ὕσαι.

However, Silenus of Chios, according to the information contained in the second book of his mythical tales, writes Ὀδυσσεύς with an aspiration from ὁδός: he says that, while Anticleia was travelling (ὀδεύειν) to the Neritos, Zeus provoked rain. She fell in her anguish and gave birth. And the new-born was called Ὀδυσσεύς from the rain on the road (τὸ ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ὕσαι).<sup>42</sup>

We find exactly the same information in the scholia to the *Odyssey*:

Ὅμηρος μὲν ἐτυμολογῶν τὸν Ὀδυσσεά πεποίηκε τὸν Αὐτόλυκον λέγοντα πολλοῖσιν γὰρ ἐγὼ δὴ ὀδυσσάμενος τόδ' ἰκάνω. Σιληνὸς δὲ ὁ Χίος ἐν δευτέρῳ Μυθικῶν Ἱστοριῶν—ἔστι δὲ δύο βιβλία—Ἀντικλείαν φησι τὴν Ὀδυσσέως μητέρα ἐγκύμονα ὀδεύουσαν παρὰ τὸ Νήριτον, ὅπερ ἐστὶ τῆς Ἰθάκης ὄρος, ὕσαντος πολὺ τοῦ Διὸς ὑπ' ἀγωνίας καὶ φόβου καταπεσοῦσαν τὸν Ὀδυσσεά ἀποτεκεῖν, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ταύτης τῆς ὀνομασίας τυχεῖν, ἐπειδὴ κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ὕσεν ὁ Ζεὺς.

Homer, giving an etymology to Odysseus, represented Autolykos saying: “*Inasmuch as I have come here as one that has willed pain to many*” [*Od.* 19.407]. But Silenus of Chios, in the second book of mythical tales (this a text in two books), says Anticleia, the mother of Odysseus, while pregnant, travelled (ὀδεύειν) to the Neritos, which is a mountain on Ithaca, when Zeus provoked a heavy rain, and she fell down because of anguish and gave birth to

<sup>40</sup> Homer, *Odyssey*, 19.406–409. Translation by Hammond.

<sup>41</sup> These correspondences have already been noticed by Chatzís 1914, XLVII–XLVIII; Hercher 1856, 7.

<sup>42</sup> Eustathius, *Commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam* 19.407, vol. 2, p. 209, l. 46 – p. 210, l. 3.

Odysseus; and this is this is why he was given this name, since Zeus had provoked rain along the road (κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ὕσεν).<sup>43</sup>

Finally we must quote a scholium by Tzetzes to Lycophron, which looks like a summary of the scholium to the *Odyssey*:

Σειληνὸς δὲ ὁ Χίος ἐν β' Μυθικῶν ἱστοριῶν—β' γὰρ γέγραφε βιβλία—φησὶν Ἀντίκλειαν τὴν Ὀδυσσεύως μητέρα ἐγκύμονα διοδεύουσαν τὸ Νήριτον τῆς Ἰθάκης ὁρος ὕσαντος πολὺ τοῦ Διὸς ὑπ' ἀγωνίας καὶ φόβου καταπεσοῦσαν τεκεῖν Ὀδυσσεά, ὅθεν ἄρα καὶ Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐκλήθη.

Silenus of Chios, in the second book of his mythical tales—for he wrote it in two books—says that Anticleia, the mother pregnant with Odysseus, travelled (διοδεύειν) through the Neritos, a mountain of Ithaca, while Zeus provoked a strong rain; she fell down because of anguish and fear, and gave birth to Odysseus; from that he was called Ὀδυσσεύς.<sup>44</sup>

Thanks to these commentaries, we can understand the literal meaning of the *Original Inquiry*, although Photius' summary is less explicit. According to these tales, the name Ὀδυσσεύς would be the compilation of two distinct words: ὁδός and ὕσαι, following pattern D1 in the appendix. That is why in the *Library* itself the rain is mentioned (ὑετοῦ γενομένου).

However, a real problem is posed by this framework of correspondences: what is the link between the different texts? The problem itself can be divided in two parts. First of all, did the Byzantine scholars such as Tzetzes and Eustathius directly read Silenus' text, or does their knowledge of this historian derive from Ptolemy himself?<sup>45</sup> The fact that the three sources quoted above speak of a work in two books allows us to suppose that they had a more developed knowledge of it, all the more so since this information is not to be found in the text of the *Library*; but maybe Photius has simply obliterated this piece of information, which was in the original of the *Original Inquiry*. In any case, there is no need to doubt that Byzantine scholars such as Tzetzes and Eustathius read Ptolemy in the text.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, what is the relation between Silenus of Chios and Ptolemy himself? Two hypotheses are possible. Ptolemy may have found the etymology of Ὀδυσσεύς in the book by Silenus, who was an Alexandrian grammarian: such a hypothesis implies that sometimes previous grammatical works underlie the

<sup>43</sup> Scholia EMT *Od.* 1.75 = *FGrHist* 27 F 1.

<sup>44</sup> Tzetzes, Scholia in Lycophronem, 786.

<sup>45</sup> The late Byzantine scholars indeed knew of Ptolemy's *Inquiry*: see Hartley 2014, 27–29.

<sup>46</sup> It is greatly to the credit of the German studies undertaken in the nineteenth and twentieth century that they have shown so many correspondences between Photius' summary and the other Byzantine works that we cannot question the fact the Medieval scholars knew Ptolemy: see Hercher 1856, 6–7 notably, and above all the fragments collected by Chatzís 1914, 3–5.

*Original Inquiry*. However, by adding the fallacious etymology Οὐτις/ῶτα, Ptolemy corrupts Silenus' demonstrations by saturation and empties them of their seriousness: the one nullifies the other.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, such a hypothesis is based on the presupposition that Silenus of Chios really existed; the fragment 27 F 1 is the only extant one we can attribute to him, and it is not easy to distinguish between him and another Alexandrian historian who had the same name, Silenus of Kale Acte.<sup>48</sup> It is not impossible either that Ptolemy crafted the etymology of Ὀδυσσεύς and attributed it to a fake reference that Photius did not mention in his summary: in such a case, Silenus of Chios would be an invention of Ptolemy, and the Byzantine scholars (followed by Jacoby) would have found this reference in the *Original Inquiry* and taken this attestation seriously. First, in other extracts of the codex 190, Photius' summary contains fake references (even if it is difficult to understand why he would omit this one, although he quotes others elsewhere, we have no criteria with which to answer such a question).<sup>49</sup> Secondly, is Silenus born in Chios just by chance, although this city is one of possible Homer's homeland?<sup>50</sup> Maybe it is a metafictional clue inciting us to identify this reference as a fake.

Whatever hypothesis we accept, the conclusion remains the same: the *Original Inquiry* is a parody of an etymological practice that was very common, and reverses its usual tools, reaching a saturation point in order to parody them and maybe to invite its readers to question their own intellectual habits.

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<sup>47</sup> Delattre (2013, 197) has already shed light on this saturation.

<sup>48</sup> The two other fragments that can be attributed to Silenus of Chios can also be attributed to Silenus of Kale Acte: *FGrHist* 27 F 2 = 175 F 1; 27 F 3 = 175 F 8. Concerning Silenus of Kale Acte, the fragments are more numerous and more explicit: undoubtedly, he composed a *History of Hannibal* (*FGrHist* F 1–2) and a treatise about Sicily (*FGrHist* F 3–8); he lived between the second Punic war and the authors of the first century BCE who quote him.

<sup>49</sup> Ptolemy often happens to quote authors that are attested nowhere else, which may prove that they are fake references: for instance, he speaks of Botryas of Myndos (Photius, *Library*, 190, 147a21–22) and Theodoros of Samothrace (152b26–7), but also of very precise references, as the eighth book of the *Commentaries* by Athenodoros of Eretria (150a37–38) and the second book *On the Mythical Tales of the Town* by the same (?) Athenodoros (150b3–5). This device is all the more cunning that these names are placed side by side with true references, for instance Herodotus, *Histories*, 1.51 (150a7–9): see Abenstein 2018, 189–192; Hartley 2014, 162; Ní Mheallaigh 2014, 120–126. Of course, referring to previous sources is a way to present the book as authoritative and to imitate scholarly activity: Delattre 2013, 196–197; Hornblower 2000.

<sup>50</sup> *Hymn to Apollo*, 172–3 (cf. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 3.105.4). Pseudo-Plutarch, *On Homer*, 2.2. *Certamen Homeri et Hesiodi*, 2, l. 13–15. Lucian, *True stories*, 2.20.

## 5 Why does Homer speak of a plant called μῶλυ?

The last Homeric question we find in the *Original Inquiry* concerns the etymology of the μῶλυ, the flower given by Hermes to Odysseus in order to immunize him against Circe's drugs.<sup>51</sup>

περὶ τοῦ παρ' Ὀμήρῳ μῶλυος τῆς βοτάνης, ἣν ἐκ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ ἀναιρεθέντος ἐν τῇ Κίρκης νήσῳ Γίγαντος λέγουσι φῦναι, ἥ καὶ τὸ ἄνθος ἔχει λευκόν· ὅτι ὁ συμμαχῶν τῇ Κίρκῃ καὶ ἀνελών τὸν Γίγαντα ὁ Ἥλιος ἦν· μῶλος δ' ἡ μάχη, ἐξ οὗ καὶ ἡ βοτάνη.

[Ptolemy speaks] about the plant μῶλυ we find in Homer, which is said to be born from the blood of a Giant killed in Circe Island, and which has a white flower; the ally of Circe who killed the Giant was Helios; the fight was hard (μῶλος), from which comes this plant.<sup>52</sup>

Generally speaking, the *Original Inquiry* is undoubtedly founded on a whole exegetical tradition that may have been well known by Ptolemy's readers. The ζήτημα posed by the etymology of the μῶλυ is divided into two different questions: on the one hand, the sound of this word has no equivalent in the Greek language; on the other hand, in the *Odyssey* only the gods know this word. The Ancient linked the μῶλυ to different words which were more usual. The scholia to the episode in the *Odyssey* makes the connection between the word μῶλυ and the verb μωλύειν, which means 'weaken' in that the plant weakens the effects of Circe's powers:

βοτάνης εἶδος παρὰ τὸ μωλύειν, ὃ ἐστὶν ἀφανίζειν τὰ φάρμακα.

A form of plant, from the verb 'to weaken' (μωλύειν), i.e. to annihilate the drugs [of Circe].<sup>53</sup>

We find exactly the same information in Eustathius:<sup>54</sup>

φασὶ δὲ οἱ παλαιοὶ καὶ μῶλυ λέγεσθαι παρὰ τὸ μωλύειν ὃ ἐστὶν ἀφανίζειν τὰ φάρμακα.

The Ancients say that the μῶλυ is so called from the verb 'to weaken' (μωλύειν), i.e. to annihilate the drugs [of Circe].<sup>55</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Homer, *Odyssey*, 10.302–306.

<sup>52</sup> Photius, *Library*, 190, 149b39–150a1.

<sup>53</sup> Scholia BHQV *Od.* 10.305.

<sup>54</sup> Also see the scholium to Lycophron, *Alexandra*, 679.

<sup>55</sup> Eustathius, *Commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam* 10.277, vol. 1, p. 381, l. 33–34.

The same episode of the *Odyssey* was interpreted in an allegorical manner, with demonstrations often based on word associations. Heraclitus interprets the μῶλυ as the allegory of wisdom:

τὴν δὲ φρόνησιν οὐκ ἀπιθάνως μῶλυ προσεῖπεν, μόνους ἀνθρώπους ἢ μόλις εἰς ὀλίγους ἐρχομένην

Homer plausibly called wisdom *moly*, because it comes only (μόνους) to humans, or because it comes to few and with difficulty (μόλις).<sup>56</sup>

In this case in particular, the double argument does not weaken the demonstration; on the contrary, it reinforces it. Eustathius of Thessalonica shows a comparable mode of interpretation, but based on other associations of words:<sup>57</sup>

ἡ δὲ ἀλληγορία ἐν τούτοις Ἑρμῆν μὲν οἶδε συνήθως τὸν λόγον, μῶλυ δὲ τὴν παιδείαν, ὥς ἐκ μώλου ὃ ἐστὶ κακοπαθείας περιγινομένην.

The allegory in these lines is based on the idea that Hermes usually embodies reason and μῶλυ the education, since it comes from a hard work (μῶλος), i.e. pain.<sup>58</sup>

These different texts clearly show us that the *Original Inquiry* draws on a whole range of interpretative practices that Ptolemy reuses in a playful way and whose tools he parodies. We can also notice that the allegorical interpretation and the mythical tale are based on the same word, μῶλος, but according to the discursive frame in which the Ancient author inserts it, its meaning is prone to change.

What is more, as in the etymology of Ὀδυσσεύς, we find in Eustathius a piece of information that must be compared to Ptolemy:

Ἀλέξανδρος δὲ ὁ Πάφιος μυθολογεῖ, Πικόλοον ἕνα τῶν Γιγάντων φυγόντα τὸν κατὰ Διὸς πόλεμον τὴν τῆς Κίρκης νῆσον καταλαβεῖν, καὶ πειρᾶσθαι ἐκβαλεῖν αὐτήν. τὸν πατέρα δὲ Ἥλιον ὑπερασπίζοντα τῆς θυγατρὸς ἀνελεῖν αὐτὸν, καὶ τοῦ αἵματος ρυέντος εἰς γῆν φύναι βοτάνην, καὶ κληθῆναι αὐτὴν μῶλυ διὰ τὸν μῶλον ἧτοι πόλεμον ἐν ᾧ ἔπεσεν ὁ ῥηθεὶς Γίγας.

Alexander of Paphos reports the following tale: Picoloos, one of the Giants, by fleeing from the war led against Zeus, reached Circe Island and tried to chase her away. Her father Helios killed him, protecting his daughter with his shield; from the blood which flowed on the

<sup>56</sup> Heraclitus, *Homeric problems*, 73.10. Translation by Russell and Konstan.

<sup>57</sup> We can find the same interpretation mode in the Greek texts of the Imperial period, but without the use of the etymology: for instance, see Pseudo-Plutarch, *On Homer*, 2.126, and Philostratus, *Heroikos*, 6.1; see Grossardt 2006, 373; Kim 2010, 183.

<sup>58</sup> Eustathius, *Commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam* 10.277, vol. 1, p. 381, l. 9–10.



earth a plant was born, and it was called μῶλυ because of the μῶλος or the battle in which the Giant aforementioned was killed.<sup>59</sup>

Here, we encounter exactly the same problem as the previous one about Silenus of Chios: is this a real reference reused by Ptolemy, or another fake one he has invented? Contrary to Silenus, there is an extant reference to this Alexander of Paphos, again in Eustathius:<sup>60</sup> perhaps Ptolemy found this argument in a real text. It is a tale according to which Homer was born in Egypt, and which we can compare to the *Lives* of the poet. Hercher makes the hypothesis that Eustathius may have found this reference in Ptolemy.<sup>61</sup> Chatzís makes a pertinent point by noticing that, thanks to this tale, Homer has the same origin as Ptolemy, at least if the latter really was from Alexandria.<sup>62</sup> Are we bound to conclude that this second reference was actually contained in the *Original Inquiry* and that Photius omitted it? This hypothesis is not unlikely; in this case, the piece of information would have been told with another extract according to which Homer knew what happened during the Trojan War thanks to documents left in Memphis.<sup>63</sup> In any case, even if it is a real source, its insertion in the *Original Inquiry* annihilates its seriousness within this context.

## 6 Conclusion: The playfulness of the *Original Inquiry*, or the fringes of knowledge

The four cases analyzed above allow us to consider that Ptolemy the Quail was not the eccentric pedant as Photius describes him as in his summary of the *Original Inquiry*.<sup>64</sup> If we insist on the intellectual tools used in this subversive treatise and provisionally forget the content, it becomes clear that our author makes knowledge reach a saturation point and short-circuit itself: this treatise is not an exhibition, but a parody of erudition. By exploring the limits of knowledge, we can identify a hidden message beneath the laughing mask of playfulness: a discourse, so long as it respects precise argumentative codes and strategies, can run in neutral. As a consequence, this text questions in a critical way the intellectual

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<sup>59</sup> Eustathius, *Commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam* 10.277, vol. 1, p. 381, l. 34–38.

<sup>60</sup> Eustathius, *Commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam* 12.65, vol. 2, p. 11, l. 19–28.

<sup>61</sup> Hercher 1856, 5–6.

<sup>62</sup> Chatzís 1914, LXVIII.

<sup>63</sup> Photius, *Library*, 190, 151a36–b7.

<sup>64</sup> Photius, *Library*, 190, 146b5–16: see Delattre 2013, 195–196; Hartley 2014, 54–66.

tools of its time. All in all, the lesson given by Ptolemy is not so far away from the criticisms that Seneca formulated against the liberal arts a half century earlier when he asserted that the Homeric questions and the “irrelevant annotations of Aristarchus” (*Aristarchi ineptae notae*) were useless from a moral point of view.<sup>65</sup> However, the *Original Inquiry* deserves to be read in the context of the Second Sophistic rather than of philosophical teaching. There is scope for a complete study of this matter, but I will limit myself to the question of the subversive etymology and its insertion in a Homeric ζήτημα. This device is to be found in two other authors posterior to Ptolemy, but who can be compared to him: Lucian’s *True Stories* and Philostratos’ *Heroikos*.

The *True Stories*, 2.20, recounts the meeting between the character-narrator Lucian and the poet Homer on the Island of the Blessed. This meeting is the occasion for Lucian to ask him few questions and to solve the principal problems posed by the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. More precisely, thanks to the etymological argument, he can provide an inventive answer to an essential question: where does Homer come from?

οὕτω δὲ δύο ἢ τρεῖς ἡμέραι διεληλύθεσαν, καὶ προσελθὼν ἐγὼ Ὅμηρῳ τῷ ποιητῇ, σχολῆς οὐσης ἀμφοῖν, τὰ τε ἄλλα ἐπυνθανόμην καὶ ὅθεν εἴη, λέγων τοῦτο μάλιστα παρ’ ἡμῖν εἰσέτι νῦν ζητεῖσθαι. Ὁ δὲ οὐδ’ αὐτὸς μὲν ἀγνοεῖν ἔφασκεν ὡς οἱ μὲν Χῖον, οἱ δὲ Σμυρναῖον, πολλοὶ δὲ Κολοφώνιον αὐτὸν νομίζουσιν· εἶναι μέντοι γε ἔλεγεν Βαβυλώνιος, καὶ παρὰ γε τοῖς πολίταις οὐχ Ὅμηρος, ἀλλὰ Τιγράνης καλεῖσθαι. Ὑστερον δὲ ὁμηρεύσας παρὰ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ἀλλάξαι τὴν προσηγορίαν.

Hardly two or three days had passed before I went up to Homer the poet when we were both at leisure, and questioned him about everything. ‘Above all,’ said I, ‘where do you come from? This point in particular is being investigated even yet at home.’ ‘I am not unaware,’ said he, ‘that some think me a Chian, some a Smyrniote and many a Colophonian. As a matter of fact, I am a Babylonian, and among my fellow-countrymen my name was not Homer but Tigranes. Later on, when I was a hostage (ὁμηρεύσας) among the Greeks, I changed my name.’<sup>66</sup>

Through this false etymology, Lucian targets the debates of the cities which claim to be Homer’s native land, and also the erudite questions posed by such a problem. For instance, in the fourth century BCE, Euphoros of Cymae had proved that the poet came from Cymae, arguing that he had been welcomed there as a guest and that the local habitants called blind men by his name.<sup>67</sup> Similarly, according

<sup>65</sup> Seneca, *Letters*, 88, 6–8 and 37–40.

<sup>66</sup> Lucian, *True Stories*, 2.20 (transl. Harmon, vol. 1).

<sup>67</sup> Pseudo-Plutarch, *On Homer*, 1.1.

to the *Certamen*, in Smyrna every blind man was named ὄμηρος, and in Chios, there was a family named the Homerids.<sup>68</sup> Ironically Lucian presents Homer as a Babylonian and attributes to him a Barbarian origin, although he is a pillar of Greek culture.<sup>69</sup> He thus mocks such debates between the cities and dismisses the opponents without pronouncing in favor of one specifically, since the poet comes from none of them. The playful reversal of the Homeric problem and the mockery of the scholarly questions proceed in the same way as in the *Original Inquiry*: Lucian criticizes his intellectual background by using its own tools, inciting his readers/listeners to question discursive activities which were consensual.

Besides the *True stories*, there is another incarnation of this phenomenon in the theorist of the Second Sophistic himself: Philostratos. The *Heroikos* is a dialog whose aim is to determine whether Homer told the truth or not in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. If there are many thematic correspondences between Ptolemy and Philostratos,<sup>70</sup> both of them also craft alternative Epic Cycles and link them to an etymological invention. The extract I have chosen concerns Achilles horses, Xanthos and Balios; in the *Heroikos* version, they are not divine:

τὴν μὲν λεγομένην ἀθανασίαν περὶ αὐτοὺς εἶναι μεμυθολογῆσθαι τῷ Ὀμήρῳ, τὴν Θετταλίαν δέ, εὐῖππὸν τε οὔσαν καὶ ἀγαθὴν, τότε δὴ ἵππους, λευκὸν τε καὶ ξανθόν, δαιμονίους τὴν ταχυτήτα καὶ τὸ ἦθος λαμπροῦς, ἵπποτροφῆσαι κατὰ θεὸν δὴ τινα, ὅποτε ὁ Ἀχιλλεὺς ἦνθει.

Their immortality was a fable of Homer's; it merely happened that Thessaly, a fine land famed for its good horses, with the help of some god produced two horses, a white one and a golden one of unbelievable speed and notable temperament just at the time Achilles was mature.<sup>71</sup>

The characterization of the horses is based on a pun with their names. The first one is 'tawny, ochre' (ξανθός): of course, it is a playful re-using of the name Ξάνθος. Similarly, their rapidity (ταχυτής) echoes the name of the second horse: if we put the accent of Βαλίος on the -ο, we obtain the adjective βαλίός which meant

<sup>68</sup> *Certamen Homeri et Hesiodi*, 2, l. 8–15.

<sup>69</sup> See Kim 2010, 167–168.

<sup>70</sup> Photius, *Library*, 190, 149a18–20 = Philostratos, *Heroikos*, 54.2–55.6 (the love of Achilles and Helene); 150a12–19 = 25.15 (the death of Odysseus coming from the sea); 150b38–151a4 = 33.24–27 (the antagonism between Palamedes and Agamemnon); 150b7–10 = 50.1–3 (the divine nature of Achilles horses); 149b39–42 = 6.1 (the status of the μῶλυ). Those correspondences have been drawn by Kim 2010, 178–179: I have reclassified them from the most to the less relevant. Moreover, we find in the *Original Inquiry* other correspondences with other Imperial texts: Photius, *Library*, 190, 150b38–151a4 = Dictys Cretensis, *Ephemeris Belli Troiani*, 1.19. See Dowden 2009, 158–161; Hartley 2014, 181–90; Pizzone 2014, 187–192.

<sup>71</sup> Philostratos, *Heroikos*, 50.2 (transl. J. Rusten).

‘fast, swift’ from the beginning of the third century CE.<sup>72</sup> Thanks to the Byzantine sources, I think ταχυτής is a hidden pun,<sup>73</sup> as shown by the scholium T *Il.* 16.149a<sup>1</sup>:

ὁ μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς χροιάς, ὁ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ πηδᾶν.

Xanthos and Balios: the first name comes from the color of the skin, the second from swift-ness.

We can notice that the scholium b *Il.* 16.149a<sup>2</sup> adds a further detail:

τὸν μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς χροιάς ὀνομάζει, τὸν δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ πηδᾶν

*He names the first from the color of his skin, the second from his swiftness.*

The subject of the verb is Homer himself, which means that, according to the scholium, the poet is the author of this etymological pun. In any case, the distinction between these words posed a problem, as proved by Eustathius’ demonstration concerning the accentuation of these words:

ἔτι ιστέον καὶ ὅτι, ὥσπερ ὁ Ξάνθος (...) βαρύνεται πρὸς διαστολὴν τοῦ κατὰ χρῶμα ξανθοῦ, οὕτω καὶ ὁ Βαλίος ἵππος παροξύνεται (...), ἵνα διαστέλλοιτο τοῦ βαλίου, ὅπερ ὀξυτόνως τὸν ταχὺν ἢ στικτὸν δηλοῖ.

One must also know that, just as Xanthos (...) has no accent on its final syllable in order to distinguish between it and the other color (ξανθός), similarly the horse Balios has an acute accent on the penultimate syllable (...), in order to distinguish between him and the adjective βαλίου, which, when there is a grave accent on its last syllable, means *fast* or *swift*.<sup>74</sup>

Of course, the texts by Ptolemy and Philostratos are not perfectly identical: the former composes alternative tales to make his fake etymologies more truthlike; the latter uses a previous etymological interpretation of the *Iliad* in order to craft a variant.

In any case, this whole framework of correspondences allows us to consider that the *Original Inquiry* is not a singular text in the intellectual context of the first-third centuries CE, nor is the *True Stories*. Ptolemy the Quail, Lucian and Philostratos all play with their tools by extracting them from the technical texts

<sup>72</sup> The adjective βαλίος is first attested with the meaning of ‘swift’ in Oppian, *Cynegetica*, 2.314.

<sup>73</sup> As for Grossardt 2006, 698–699, he links βαλίος with φάλιος, which means ‘black with white spots’.

<sup>74</sup> Eustathius, *Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem pertinentes* 16.149, vol. 3, p. 823, l. 19–p. 824, l. 2.

in which they originate and inserting them into contexts of a fiction.<sup>75</sup> The three of them playfully reverse the etymological argument, each in his manner: these three cases are sophistic in that they show less interest in telling *the* truth than in crafting *a* truth, a truth whose aim is to question commonplaces and to explore in a playful way the boundaries of Human knowledge.

## 7 Appendix: Typology of the etymological argument in the *Original Inquiry*

### 7.1 Type 1: From a proper noun to a common noun

Type 1.1: Etiology of the name of a class of person

147a14–16: Περίτανός τις ὄνομα Ἀρκὰς Ἑλένην συνοῦσαν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ἐν Ἀρκαδίᾳ ἐμοίχευσεν, Ἀλέξανδρος δ' αὐτὸν ποινὴν τῆς μοιχείας εἰσπραττόμενος ἐξευνούχισε, καὶ ἐξ ἐκείνου Ἀρκάδες τοὺς εὐνούχους περιτάνους λέγουσιν (An Arcadian whose name was Peritanos had an adulterous relationship with Helen in Arcadia while she was Alexander's lover; Alexander, wanting to avenge himself of this adultery, made him a eunuch, and from him the Arcadians name the eunuchs *peritanoi*).

Type 1.2: Etiology of the name of a class of thing

Type 1.2.1: *Artefact*. 147b34–36: Κόρυθος, Ἴβηρ τὸ γένος ὦν καὶ Ἡρακλέους ἐρώμενος, πρῶτος κόρυθα κατεσκεύασεν, ἐξ οὗ καὶ τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν λαβεῖν φησι τὸ ὄπλον (Corythos, who was Iberian by race and who was Heracles' beloved, was the first to craft a helmet (κόρυθα); from that the implement derived its name, according to Ptolemy).

Type 1.2.2: *Plant*. 149a35–38: Περὶ τῆς Ἑλενίου βοτάνης, ἣ ἐν Ῥόδῳ φύεται, ὅτι ἀπὸ τῆς Ἑλένης ἐπωνομάσθη· παρὰ γὰρ τὴν δρῦν ὥφθη φυεῖσα, ἀφ' ἧς ἐαυτὴν ἀπήγχεεν Ἑλένη (As for the Helen flower which grows in Rhodes, it derives its name from Helene, for it was seen growing near the oak on which she hanged herself).

150a27–36: Ἡ δὲ ψαλάκανθα βοτάνη ἐστὶν Αἰγυπτία, ἣτις ἵπποις περιαιπομένη νίκην παρέχει καὶ εὐδαιμονίαν. Φασὶ δὲ ὡς ἡ Ψαλάκανθα νύμφη ἐγένετο ἐν Ἰκαρίᾳ τῇ νήσῳ, ἣτις ἐρασθεῖσα Διονύσου συνέπραξεν αὐτῷ τὴν πρὸς Ἀριάδην ὁμίλιαν, ἐφ' ᾗ καὶ αὐτὴ συγγένοιτο·

<sup>75</sup> There is one important limit to the comparison between these three authors: Kim (2010, 19) has noticed that, in contrast to the works of Lucian and Philostratus, the *Original Inquiry* does appear to be a unit and seems to be a miscellaneous text. However, the play on echoes and the elements of internal cohesion we have identified above allow us to consider that there is a global structure despite its apparent disorder.

καὶ ὡς Διόνυσος μὲν οὐκ ἠβουλήθη· Ψαλάκανθα δ' ἐπεβούλευσεν Ἀριάδνη, ὃ δ' ὀργισθεὶς μετεμόρφωσεν αὐτὴν εἰς τὴν πόαν· μεταγνοὺς δὲ ἐπὶ τιμῇ τοῦ φυτοῦ τῷ Ἀριάδνης αὐτὸ περιέθηκε στεφάνῳ τῷ κατηστερισμένῳ ἐν οὐρανῷ (The psalacantha is an Egyptian flower: once it is tied around horses, it gives victory and prosperity. They also say that Psalacantha was a nymph who lived in the Island of Icaria: totally enamored of Dionysos, she helped him to have sexual intercourse with Ariadne, on condition that he would have sexual intercourse with her too; and Dionysos did not agree to that. Psalacantha wanted to plot against Ariadne and he, angry, transformed her into a plant; but regretting his decision, in honor of this plant, he put it on Ariadne's crown, which had joined the stars in the sky).

### Type 1.3: Etiology of the tale content (and restitution of the 'truth' based on a variant)

148a21–23: Ἀλεξάνδρου πατὴρ οὐχ ὁ Φίλιππος γένοιτο ἀλλὰ τις τοῦνομα Δράκων, γένος Ἀρκᾶς, ἐξ οὗ καὶ τὸν περὶ τοῦ δράκοντος μῦθον ρύηται (Alexander's father was not Philip, but someone called Snake, who came from Arcadia; from that comes the tale about the snake).

150b13–16: Ὁ Ἡρακλῆς οὐχὶ τὸ τοῦ Νεμεαίου λέοντος δέρας ἠμπέσχετο, ἀλλὰ Λέοντός τινος ἐνὸς τῶν Γιγάντων ἐπὶ μονομαχίας προκλήσει ὑφ' Ἡρακλέους ἀνηρημένου (Heracles did not cover himself with the skin of the Nemea lion, but of a so-called Lion, one of the Giants killed by Heracles in a defiance to a single combat).

## 7.2 Type 2: From a common noun to a proper noun

149b3–5: Φασὶ δ' Ἥχῳ μὲν τὴν Ἑλένην τὸ κύριον κληθῆναι διὰ τὸ φωνόμιμον αὐτὴν γενέσθαι, Ἑλένην δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐν ἔλει ὑπὸ Λήδας τεχθῆναι (They say that Helen was called with the proper name Echo because she could imitate voices, and then Helen because Leda gave birth to her in a marsh [ἐν ἔλει]).

149b5–8: Ὁ ἐν Λακεδαίμονι τόπος τὸ Σανδάλιον ἀπὸ τοῦ τῆς Ἑλένης σανδαλίου, ἐκπεσόντος αὐτῆς ἐν αὐτῷ διωκομένης ὑπ' Ἀλεξάνδρου ἔλκει τὴν κλῆσιν (The place Sandalion in Sparta is so called because of Helen's sandal, since she had fallen here when she was pursued by Alexander).

148b3–7: Εὐπόμπου τοῦ Σαμίου, ὃς δράκοντα θηρίον τέρας ἔτρεφεν ἄπιστον καὶ εἰπεῖν καὶ ἀκοῦσαι, τούτου τοῦ Εὐπόμπου παῖδα Δράκοντα τοῦνομα ὄξυωπέστατον γενέσθαι φασίν, ὡς διὰ σταδίων κ' θεωρεῖν ῥαδίως (Eupompos of Samos fed a wild snake, which is incredible to say and to hear; they say that the latter was the son of this Eupompos, that his name was Snake and that he had a very good sight, so that he could easily keep watch within a 20-stadium radius).

### 7.3 Type 3: From a proper noun to another proper noun

#### Type 3.1: From the name of an individual to the name of a thing

147b28–31: Τὴν Ἀργὼ ἐν Ὀσση τῆς Θεσσαλίας Ἡρακλῆς μὲν κατασκευάζει, ὄνομα δ' αὐτῇ τίθησιν ἀπὸ Ἄργου τοῦ Ἰάσονος, ὃς ἦν ἐρώμενος αὐτῷ (As for Argo, Heracles built it on the Ossa in Thessalia and gave to it this name from Argos, Jason's son, who was his beloved).

#### Type 3.2: From the name of an individual to the name of a place

147b37–148a4: Ἐν Κρήτῃ τάφος λεγόμενος τοῦ Διὸς Ὀλύμπου τοῦ Κρητὸς ἐστὶν ὅσπερ τοῦ Κρόνου λαβὼν τὸν Δία ἔτρεφε τε καὶ ἐπαίδευε τὰ θεῖα, ἀλλὰ γὰρ βάλλει, φησὶν, ὁ Ζεὺς τὸν τροφέα καὶ διδάσκαλον κεραυνῷ, ὅτι δὴ τοὺς Γίγαντας αὐτοῦ τῇ βασιλείᾳ ἐπιθέσθαι ὑπέτιθετο. Ἀλλὰ βαλὼν καὶ νεκρὸν ἔχων μετεμελείτο. Μὴ ἔχων δ' ἄλλως τὸ πάθος ἐκκλίνει, δίδωσι τὸ ἴδιον ὄνομα τῷ τάφῳ τοῦ ἀνηρημένου (The tomb in Crete which is said to be Zeus' belongs to the Cretan Olympos who, after having received Zeus the son of Cronos, fed him and educated him about the gods, but, according to Ptolemy, Zeus struck his foster-father and teacher with a thunderbolt, because he had proposed to the Giants to take his royal power. But after having struck him, holding the dead body, he repented. Since he had no other way to soothe his suffering, he gave his own name to the tomb of his victim).

150a20–24: Μετὰ Ἀμύκου φασὶν Ἰάσων, ἀλλ' οὐχὶ Πολυδεύκης ἐμαχέσατο. Καὶ ὁ χῶρος μαρτυρεῖ, Ἰησόνιος αἰχμὴ καλούμενος (They say that Jason and not Pollux fought against Amycus, as witnesses the place called 'Jason's spear').

153a7–10: Ἡ Λευκὰς πέτρα ἀπὸ Λεύκου τοῦ Ὀδυσσεύως ἐταίρου τὴν κλῆσιν ἔλαβεν, ὃς Ζακύνθιος μὲν γένος ἦν, ἀνηρέθη δ', ὥς φησιν ὁ ποιητής, ὑπ' Ἀντίφου (The rock in Leucas received its name from Leucos, one of Odysseus' companions, who was Zacynthian by race and was killed, as the poet says, by Antiphos [Homer, *Iliad*. 4.489–493]).

#### Type 3.3: From the proper noun of a place to the proper noun of an individual

153a36–39: Μάκητα δέ φασὶ τὸν Βουθρώτιον Λευκοπέτραν ἐπικληθῆναι διότι τετράκις αὐτὸν καταβαλὼν τῶν ἐρωτικῶν κακώσεων ἀπαλλάττοιο (They say that Maces of Bouthrotos has the nickname 'White Rock', because, after throwing himself four times [from the rock of Leucas], he was freed from the misfortunes of love).

### 7.4 Type 4: Complex cases

#### Type 4.1: Double etymology

147b16–20: Νεῖλος ὁ Ἡρακλῆς ἀπὸ γενέσεώς φησιν ἐκαλεῖτο, ἐπεὶ δ' Ἦραν ἔσωσεν ἐπερχόμενον αὐτῇ ἀνελὼν τὸν ἀνώνυμον καὶ πυρίπνοον γίγαντα, ἐκεῖθεν διὰ τὸ ἀπαλαλκεῖν τῆς Ἦρας τὸν πόλεμον μετέβαλε τὴν κλῆσιν (Heracles, when he was a new-born, was called

Neilos according to Ptolemy; but when he saved Hera by killing the nameless fire-breathing Giant who was assailing her, for that reason he changed his name [τὴν κλήσιν] because he had protected Hera).

148a36–38: Ἀμφιάραιος ἐκλήθη, ἐπεὶ ἄμφω οἱ τῆς μητρὸς γονεῖς ἡράσαντο αὐτὴν ἄνευ τεκεῖν μόγου (Amphiaraios was so called because both (ἄμφω) the parents of his mother had prayed for her to give birth painlessly [ἄνευ μόγου, so ῥᾶον]).

#### Type 4.2: Common noun preceded by a privative ἀ

152b29–32: Ἀχιλλεύς διὰ μὲν τὸ ἐκ πυρὸς αὐτὸν σωθῆναι καόμενον ὑπὸ τῆς μητρὸς Πυρίσσοος ἐκαλεῖτο, διότι δὲ ἐν τῶν χειλέων αὐτοῦ κατακαυθεῖη, Ἀχιλλεύς ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς ὠνομάσθη (Achilles, because he had been saved from fire when he was burnt by his mother, was called ‘Saved from fire’, but because one of his lips was entirelyly burnt, he was called Achilles [ἐν τῶν χειλέων + privative ἀ] by his father).

## 7.5 Type 5: Alphabet and etymology

#### Type 5.1: From a noun to a letter

151b7–9: Ἀλφειῷ τῷ ποταμῷ γέρας δωρούμενος Ἡρακλῆς, νικήσας ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ, ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ ἐκάλεσε τὸ ἄλφα καὶ προέταξε τῶν στοιχείων (In order to offer a gift of honor to the river Alpheios, Heracles, after winning at Olympia, named the ‘alpha’ after it and placed it at the very beginning of the alphabet).

#### Type 5.2: From a letter to a noun: the etymological alphabet of Ptolemy the Quail

151b9–28: Φλυαρῶν οὗτος ὁ μυθογράφος, Μωσῆς, φησίν, ὁ τῶν Ἑβραίων νομοθέτης ἄλφα ἐκαλεῖτο διὰ τὸ ἀλφούς ἔχειν ἐπὶ τοῦ σώματος· Γαλέριος δὲ Κράσσος ὁ χιλιάρχος, ὁ ἐπὶ Τιβερίου Καίσαρος χιλιάρχος, βῆτα ἐκαλεῖτο ἡδέως σεύτλω χρώμενος ὁ δὲ βητάκιον καλοῦσι Ῥωμαῖοι. Καὶ Ὀρpullis δὲ ἡ Κυζικηνὴ ἐταῖρα, γάμμα, Ἀντήνωρ δὲ ὁ τὰς Κρητικὰς γράφας ἱστορίας, δέλτα, διὰ τὸ ἀγαθὸς εἶναι καὶ φιλόπολις· τοὺς γὰρ Κρητὰς τὸ ἀγαθὸν δέλτον καλεῖν. Ἀπολλώνιος δέ, ὁ ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Φιλοπάτορος χρόνοις ἐπ’ ἀστρονομίᾳ περιβόητος γεγονώς, <ε> ἐκαλεῖτο διότι τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ <ε> συμπεριφέρεται τῷ τῆς σελήνης περὶ ἣν ἐκεῖνος μάλιστα ἠκρίβωτο. Σάτυρος δ’ ὁ Ἀριστάρχου γνώριμος ζῆτα ἐκαλεῖτο διὰ τὸ ζητητικὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ Αἴσωπὸν φασιν ὡς ὑπὸ Ἰδμονος τοῦ δεσπότητος θῆτα ἐκαλεῖτο διὰ τὸ δουλικὸς τις εἶναι καὶ πολύτροπος· θῆτες γάρ οἱ δοῦλοι. Καὶ ἡ Κυψέλου δὲ μήτηρ, χωλὴ οὖσα, Λάβδα ἐκλήθη ὑπὸ τοῦ Πυθίου. Δημοκύδης δὲ Πυθαγόραν φησὶ καταγράψαντα πάντας τοὺς ἀριθμούς, τῷ γ’ στοιχείῳ κληθῆναι (This mythographer, talking nonsense, says that Moses, the lawgiver of the Hebrews, was called Alpha because he had eczema (ἀλφός) on his body; Galerius Crassus, the military tribune (he was military tribune under Tiberius Cesar) was called Beta because he liked to use beet, which the Romans call betacium. And Horpullis, the courtesan from Cyzicus, Gamma, and Antenor, who wrote the Cretan Histories, Delta, because he was a good man who loved his city; indeed, the Cretans call the good ‘delton’. Apollonios, who, during the time of Philopator, became famous in the field of astrology, was called E because



the shape of the E corresponds to that of the moon, about which he had a great knowledge. Satyros, who was close to Aristarchos, was called Zêta because he loved research (ζητητικός), and they say that Aesopus was called Theta by his master Idmon because he was servile and versatile, for slaves are 'thetes'. And the mother of Cypselos, who was crippled, was called Labda by the Pythian god. And Democyles says that Pythagoras, who described every single number, was called by the third letter).

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Simone Beta

## To Play (and to Have Fun) with Literature: Comic Wordplay in Greek Poetry

Among the many funny features of Plato's *Symposium*, there are some jokes on the names of the banqueters. When Pausanias, the lover of the landlord Agathon, finishes his speech, the absolute genitive Πausανίου δὲ παυσάμενον is a wordplay based on the (fake) etymology of his name—and that here Plato is making fun of Pausanias' name is confirmed by the fact that the verb παύω is repeated other five times in the next lines.<sup>1</sup> This example shows how real proper names (even very popular names, such as Pausanias) might be interpreted in an amusing way by making a comic use of the basic principles of etymology. Consequently, it should not be a surprise to see how such a goal might be easier to achieve if the proper names are not proper at all (in the sense they are not existing). The names invented and created by Aristophanes and by his fellow comic poets demonstrate that this way of playing with words has given very satisfactory results: the old judge Philocleon and his son Bdelycleon, the two main characters of *Wasps*, one of the first Aristophanic comedies, performed in 422 BCE, were called like that because their names had to indicate to the audience the opposite feelings they felt toward Cleon, the leader of the Athenian radical party—love (φιλεῖν) for the first, disgust (βδελύττειν) for the second.<sup>2</sup>

But, in order to reach this hilarious outcome (that is, making fun of someone), it was not necessary to create on purpose a name that did not exist (neither Philocleon nor Bdelycleon are attested elsewhere), because it was possible to play on names that already existed, as other poets did. The writers I am thinking of are mostly the poets who dedicated themselves to the composition of epigrams (and, among these poets, those who devoted themselves to satirical epigrams in particular), although I do not intend to overlook another poetic genre equally concise, namely riddles and conundrums in verse, since etymological wordplays did not always have a comic goal.

This essay will take its start from some satirical examples in order to demonstrate how these very wordplays have been used by other anonymous poets (not only during the imperial period, but also in Byzantine times) in order to teach the Greek language and its literature through the bizarre tools of enigmatic poetry.

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<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Symposium* 185ce.

<sup>2</sup> On this comedy see the recent commented edition by Biles/Douglas Olson 2015, which has somehow replaced the older edition by MacDowell 1971.

# 1 Epigrams and wordplays

## 1.1 Meleager

In an elegiac couplet that we read in the fifth book of the *Palatine Anthology*, the book dedicated to heterosexual love epigrams, Meleager, the exquisite Hellenistic poet who is responsible for the harvest of the oldest collection of Greek epigrams, uses these words to celebrate the charm of a beautiful woman named Callistion:

γυμνὴν ἦν ἐσίδεις Καλλίστιον, ὦ ξένε, φήσεις·  
“Ἥλλακται διπλοῦν γράμμα Συρηκοσίων.”<sup>3</sup>

Since we know that the Syracusan poet Epicharmus was the inventor of two letters of the Greek alphabet (χ and ζ), Claude de Saumaise, the young philologist of Dijon who first discovered the manuscript of the *Palatine Anthology* in the Palatine Library of Heidelberg at the beginning of the 17th century, gathered that this Callistion was endowed with a fascinating butt.<sup>4</sup> According to Salmasius (such was the Latin name with which he was known among his literate colleagues), the ‘double letter of the Syracusans’ was the χ (‘double letter’ means ‘a letter written with two strokes’): it would be wrong—Meleager says—to call this woman Καλλίστιον (a diminutive of Καλλιστώ, ‘the most beautiful’), because she should be called Καλλίσχιον (‘the woman with beautiful hips’, or better, ‘the woman with beautiful buttocks’) instead, by presuming that the meaning of the two strokes of χ ‘has been changed’ (ἥλλακται) by turning the letter into a τ.

According to this interpretation, the Hellenistic poet is here playing on two different etymologies: if the name Καλλίστιον indicates a kind of general beauty (the most beautiful woman), the name Καλλίσχιον indicates a kind of specific beauty (the woman with beautiful hips—or beautiful buttocks).<sup>5</sup>

If this explanation does not persuade us, we can look at the hypothesis made by Karl Preisendanz. According to the German scholar who has been the first to study the different hands that have copied the precious manuscript of the *Palatine Anthology*, this ‘double letter of the Syracusans’ would not be the χ, but,

<sup>3</sup> Meleager, *Greek Anthology* 5.192 (= LVII Gow–Page): “Stranger, were you to see Callistion naked, you would say that the double letter of the Syracusans has been changed into T” (transl. Paton, 1918). For a detailed commentary on this epigram, see Gow/Page 1965, 639.

<sup>4</sup> On the adventurous story of this manuscript see Beta 2017.

<sup>5</sup> On the invention of the two letters χ and ζ, see Pliny the Elder, *Natural history* 7.192 (but the Latin text is uncertain).

much more simply, the syllable composed by the first two letters of the word that indicated the people who lived in the town of Syracuse (συ): if we ‘change the letters’, that is if we change their order, by putting the second letter (υ) before the first (σ), we have the word ὕς (‘Piglet’), that was the nickname of a harlot whose real name was, according to the Hellenistic poet Machon, Καλλίστιον.<sup>6</sup>

In both cases, by the way, we happen to be confronted with two different kinds of wordplay: in the first (χ instead of τ), there is the substitution of a letter; in the second (υσ instead of συ), there is a palindrome.

Preisendanz’s guess, whose soundness has been rejected by most modern commentators, is not based on an etymological wordplay. But in the epigrams of the *Palatine Anthology* we find many other similar examples that are based on etymology, although their authors are not always true poets like Meleager.

## 1.2 Diogenes Laërtius

In the second century CE, Diogenes Laërtius used this trick to make fun of the philosopher Diodorus Cronus:

Κρόνε Διόδωρε, τίς σε δαιμόνων κακῇ  
 ἄθυμῃ ξυνείρυσεν,  
 ἴν’ αὐτὸς αὐτὸν ἐμβάλης εἰς Τάρταρον  
 Στίλπωνος οὐ λύσας ἔπη  
 αἰνιγματώδη; τοιγὰρ εὐρέθης Κρόνος  
 ἔξωθε τοῦ ῥῶ κάππα τε.<sup>7</sup>

The target of the epigram was a certain Diodorus, a philosopher who was a pupil of a certain Apollonius, who had been a disciple of Eubulides of Miletus, teacher of Demosthenes. This Diodorus, known with the nickname of Cronos, had not been able to solve the riddles propounded by another philosopher, Stilpon of Megara, during a banquet organized by the Egyptian emperor Ptolemy I Soter; feeling ashamed, he had decided to leave the country and disappear. Diogenes Laërtius mocks him by stating that his nickname is correct, providing that the letters kappa and rho are eliminated—that is, by turning Κρόνος (the god Cronos, father of Zeus) into ὄνος (‘donkey’).

<sup>6</sup> Machon’s statement comes from fr. 18.32–37 Gow (witnessed by Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists* 13.583a); see the commentary of Gow 1965.

<sup>7</sup> Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* 2.112: “Diodorus Cronus, what sad fate / buried you in despair,/so that you hastened to the shades below,/perplexed by Stilpo’s quibbles?/You would deserve your name of Cronus better/if C and R were gone” (transl. Hicks 1925).

### 1.3 Ammianus and others

The poet Ammianus, a contemporary of Diogenes Laërtius, made fun of the sophist Marcus Antonius Polemon in a similar way:

ἤδειμεν, Πολέμων, Ἀντώνιον ὄντα σε πάντες·  
ἐξαπίνης τρία σοι γράμματα πῶς ἔλιπεν;<sup>8</sup>

The point is the same: the philosopher's name (who was notorious for his greed, if we believe what Philostratus says of him in his *Lives of the sophists*) changes its meaning when it loses three letters—the first three letters, in this case.<sup>9</sup> Ἀντώνιος becomes then ὤνιος, that is 'someone who can be bought'.

In this example, as in Diogenes Laërtius', this is the way the etymological pun seems to work: since neither the name (Antonios) nor the nickname (Cronos) appear to have a clear connection with the personality of the character who brings them, it is necessary to pull out the true meaning of the name, so to speak, by eliminating one letter or more; thanks to this elimination, the name receives a meaning that pertains perfectly to either the name (in Polemon's case, 'venal') or the nickname (in Diodorus' case, 'donkey').

Such a pattern is quite usual in satirical epigrams. We find a witty example in Martial as well:

*Cinnam, Cinname, te iubes vocari.*  
*Non est his, rogo, Cinna, barbarismus?*  
*Tu si Furius, ante dictus esses,*  
*Fur ista ratione dicereris.*<sup>10</sup>

Here, if we want to find the correct etymology of the name *Furius*, what we need is simply to cut the last three letters out; the result is the name *fur* ('thief').

<sup>8</sup> Ammianus, *Greek Anthology* 11.181: "We all knew, Polemon, that your name was Antonius. How is it that three letters are suddenly missing?" (transl. Paton 1918). On Ammianus' epigrams, see Nisbet 2003, 134–164, and Schulte 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Philostratus, *Lives of the sophists* 1.25.

<sup>10</sup> Martial, *Epigrams* 6.17: "Cinnamus, you bid us address you as Cinna. Is not this, I ask, Cinna, a barbarism? If you had been called Furius before, you would, on that principle, be called Fur" (transl. Ker 1919). For a similar joke, see *Epigrammata Bobiensia* 41 (with the commentary of Nocchi 2016).

But let us come back to our Polemon. The sophist of Laodicea seems to have been somehow unpleasant to Ammianus, since our poet appears to have mocked him in two other epigrams.<sup>11</sup>

In the first one, the wordplay is quite far-fetched:

Μασταύρων ἀφελὼν δύο γράμματα, Μάρκε, τὰ πρῶτα,  
ἄξιος εἶ πολλῶν τῶν ὑπολειπομένων.<sup>12</sup>

If we take away the first two letters of the proper geographical name Μασταύρων (Mastaura was a town between Lydia and Caria), we obtain the plural genitive σταύρων; since σταῦρος means ‘cross’ and crosses were used to crucify slaves, what Ammianus wanted to say is that the Marcus to whom the epigram is directed deserved to be crucified. The connection between this Marcus and our Marcus Antonius Polemon is indeed Mastaura: since the sophist was born in that part of Asia Minor (his hometown was Laodicea of Lycos, located between the regions of Lydia, Caria, and Phrygia), it is easy to infer that the mention of Mastaura was an allusion to Polemon.

As I have said before, the wordplay that lies behind this epigram is a bit forced; moreover, it has nothing to do with the etymology and the meaning of the philosopher’s name. But the pun we read in the elegiac couplet which in the eleventh book of the *Palatine Anthology*, the section dedicated to convivial (the first half) and satirical (the second half) epigrams, follows suit, is based again on Polemon’s name:

θηρίον εἶ παρὰ γράμμα, καὶ ἄνθρωπος διὰ γράμμα·  
ἄξιος εἶ πολλῶν, ὧν παρὰ γράμμα γράφη.<sup>13</sup>

If we remove the first letter, the sophist’s proper name (Μάρκος) becomes the name of a wild animal (ἄρκος is a variant of the most common ἄρκτος, a noun that means ‘bear’): because of his own wickedness, Μάρκος deserves to be torn into pieces by an ἄρκος. Here as well, as in the pun on Antonios, the proper name hides a significant detail connected with Polemon’s behaviour: if there we had venality, here we have cruelty.

<sup>11</sup> The identification of Ammianus’ victim in these epigrams is doubtful, but Schulte 2004, Ammianus’ last editor, is sure that the Marcus mocked in both poems is always Marcus Antonius Polemon.

<sup>12</sup> Ammianus, *Greek Anthology* 11.230: “Take away, Marcus, the first two letters from Mastauron, and you deserve many of what is left” (transl. Paton 1918).

<sup>13</sup> Ammianus, *Greek Anthology* 11.231: “You are a wild beast all but a letter and a man by a letter, and you deserve many of the beasts that you are all but a letter” (transl. Paton 1918).

We might wonder why Ammianus decided not to play on the third name of the philosopher as well (admitted that there was indeed a reason for this), because it would not have been difficult to make fun of his contentious temperament through the composition of an epigram on the belligerent Polemon. It is likely that the exquisite art of a poet that was still pursuing the strict rules of the Hellenistic poetry could not debase itself by dedicating an epigram to such a trivial pun.

The use of this kind of wordplay was of course possible only if the names were not true—or, better, if there was not a tight connection between these names and the real characters. It is what happens in one of the epigrams of the most famous satirical poets of the first century CE:

ἄνθρακα καὶ δάφνην παραβύεται ὁ στρατιώτης  
 Αὔλος, ἀποσφίγξας μήλινα λωμάτια.  
 Φρίσσει καὶ τὸ μάτην ἴδιον ξίφος· ἦν δέ ποτ' εἴπη,  
 “Ἐρχοντ’”, ἐξαπίνης ὕπτιος ἐκτέταται.  
 Οὐδενὶ δ' οὐ Πολέμωνι προσέρχεται, οὐ Στρατοκλείδῃ·  
 ἀλλὰ φίλῳ χρήται πάντοτε Λυσιμάχῳ.<sup>14</sup>

The soldier Aulus is portrayed as a coward—and, in effect, the epigram is part of the section dedicated εἰς δειλούς, “to the cowards”. The precise meaning of the first couplet is still under dispute, but the rest of the epigram is clear: Aulus is scared by his own sword; he is ready to pretend to be dead if the enemies arrive; he does not like men whose name remind him of war (Polemon, obviously, and Stratoclidēs—a name that, according to the last commentary on Lucillius’ epigrams, seems to be a name invented by the poet on purpose); he likes to spend his time with men whose name reminds him of peace (Lysimachus, a name which benefited from a long pacifist tradition—together with the more famous Lysistrata—thanks to Aristophanes and his celebrated comedy).<sup>15</sup>

But let us come back for another time to the wordplay Μάρκος/ἄρκος:<sup>16</sup> besides its purported forcefulness, which concerns the epigram and, above all, the character portrayed in the poem, the pun is particularly significant because the elimination of the first letter of a word, with the goal to create a different word, is

<sup>14</sup> Lucillius, *Greek Anthology* 11.210: “Aulus the soldier stops his ears when he sees charcoal or laurel, wrapping his yellow duds tight round his head, and he shudders at his own useless sword; and if you ever say, ‘They are coming’, he falls flat on his back. No Polemo or Stratoclidēs will he approach, but always has Lysimachus for a friend” (transl. Paton 1918).

<sup>15</sup> For a detailed commentary on this epigram, see Floridi 2014, 397–401.

<sup>16</sup> Ammianus makes fun of Polemon in another epigram as well (11.180—a quite complicated couplet: see the numerous proposals of explanation discussed in detail by Nisbet 2003, 145–60).



by far the most common pattern of Greek and Latin riddles. And, as we have seen in some of the examples quoted so far, this pun is often connected with a wordplay based on etymology. Let us consider, for instance, the following anonymous epigram:

γράμμα περισσὸν ἔχεις τὸ προκειμένον· ἦν ἀφέλη τις  
τοῦτό σοι, οἰκεῖον κτήσῃ ἀπλῶς ὄνομα.<sup>17</sup>

This couplet would be a true riddle if the ancient scholion, whose text we read in the margin of the manuscript, did not let us know that, in composing it, the poet had in mind a certain Opianus, described as a ἡγεμόνα πότην. If we correct πότην into πότης, the meaning of this expression otherwise obscure becomes ‘the leader of the booze’, a periphrasis that might indicate a symposiarch, the banqueter who had the assignment of leading the final part of a banquet by deciding upon the quantity of wine the other fellow banqueters were supposed to drink—and the percentage of water that the slaves had to pour inside the wine. If we take away the first letter of the proper name Ὀπιάνος (a name never attested elsewhere), what we get is Πιάνος, a name that reminds the verb πίνειν (‘to drink’).

The correctness of the scholion is under dispute, though: the name of the mysterious figure might be, for instance, Ἀπιών (a real name, this time), ready to turn into Πιών, the aorist participle meaning ‘the man that has drunk’, that is ‘the drinker’—or even the historian Appian of Alexandria (Ἀππιανός): after all, in the other, smaller collection of Greek epigrams, the anthology assembled by Maximus Planudes between the 13th and the 14th century, we read the name Ἀπιάνος. But the etymological wordplay is always present, no matter how we solve the riddle—and it is a pun that is attested in Latin literature too.

Suetonius tells us that, when the young Tiberius was in the army, he liked wine a lot. For this reason his fellow soldiers had facetiously changed his three names: instead of calling him *Tiberius Claudius Nero*, they murmured that his real names were *Biberius Caldus Mero*. *Biberius* alludes to his passion for drinking (*bibere*); *Caldus* plays on the Roman custom of drinking hot (*caldus*) wine; *Mero* is a reference to ‘pure’ (*merus*) wine, that is ‘not mixed with water’.<sup>18</sup>

In this amusing anecdote, which makes fun of a surely reprehensible habit of the young Tiberius which was nonetheless much less blameworthy than the vicious depravations the old emperor will show in his ‘buen retiro’ of Capri, there

<sup>17</sup> Anonymous, *Greek Anthology* 11.426: “The first letter of your name is superfluous; if one takes it away you will acquire by simple means a name that suits you” (transl. Paton 1918).

<sup>18</sup> Suetonius, *Life of Tiberius* 42.1: “In castris tiro etiam tum propter nimiam vini aviditatem pro Tiberio ‘Biberius’, pro Claudio ‘Caldus’, pro Nerone ‘Mero’ vocabatur”.

are two different kinds of wordplay. The first kind, witnessed by the *nomen* of the emperor (*Claudius/caldius*), is the inversion of a couple of letters. This pattern is present in some satirical epigrams as well:

Χείλων καὶ Λείχων ἴσα γράμματα. Ἐς τί δὲ τοῦτο;  
Λείχει γὰρ Χείλων, κᾶν ἴσα, κᾶν ἄνισα.<sup>19</sup>

The anonymous poet is making fun of a certain Cheilon whose speaking name (Χείλων recalls χεῖλος, ‘lip’) disclosed his depraved sexual inclinations, since, being a fan of the practice of *cunnilingus*, he liked to lick (in Greek, λείχειν). The inversion of the letters λ and χ does not change the meaning of the epigram: Cheilon, the ‘man of the lips’, and Leichon, the ‘man of the licks’, were the same person—if I can give my own contribution to this list of wordplays.<sup>20</sup>

But the ancients might create other examples of wordplay along the same pattern that were even more complicated. This Latin epigram of Ausonius is a limpid demonstration of this statement:

Λαῖς Ἔρωσ et Ἴτυς, Χείρων et Ἔρως, Ἴτυς alter  
*nomina si scribas, prima elementa adime,*  
*ut facias verbum, quod tu facis, Eune magister.*  
*Dicere me Latium non decet opprobrium.*<sup>21</sup>

Eunus, a teacher, was also a *ligurritor*—that is, he shared Cheilon’s vice. In order not to write the Latin word that indicated the favourite sexual inclination of this immoral pedagogue, Ausonius seeks help from the quite baroque wordplay that consists in taking the first letter of six Greek words so as to build a verb (λείχει), which points at an activity we already know.<sup>22</sup>

The second kind, witnessed by the *praenomen* and the *cognomen* of the emperor (*Tiberius/Biberius*, *Nero/Mero*), is the change of the first letter.

<sup>19</sup> Anonymous, *Greek Anthology* 11.222: “ΧΕΙΛΩΝ (Chilon) and ΛΕΙΧΩΝ (licking) have the same letters. But what does that matter? For Chilon licks whether they are the same or not” (transl. Paton 1918).

<sup>20</sup> On the ancient view about *cunnilingus*, see Henderson 1991, 51–52 et 185–186.

<sup>21</sup> Ausonius, *Epigrams on various matters* 85: “Laïs, Eros, and Itys, Chiron and Eros, Itys again, these names write down and take their initials, that thou mayest form a word describing what thou dost, schoolmaster Eunus. To name the infamy in Latin becomes me not” (transl. Evelyn White 1921).

<sup>22</sup> In another epigram (87, the sixth—and also the latter—of a small sequence dedicated by Ausonius to this perverse teacher), the same wordplay involves a much larger number of letters. On these epigrams, see the commentaries of Green 1991, 411–413, and of Kay 2001, 234–247.

This last pattern is more frequent than the other; the eleventh book of the Greek Anthology gives us many examples of this kind of wordplay. Two anonymous epigrams play on the same change. The first one makes fun of a certain Agathinos:

βουλευείς, Ἀγαθῖνε· τὸ βῆτα δὲ τοῦτ' ἐπρίω νῦν,  
εἰπέ, πόσης τιμῆς; δέλτα γὰρ ἦν πρότερον.<sup>23</sup>

After having become a βουλευτής ('senator'), this Agathinos had started to practice the prestigious job of βουλεύειν ('to be a senator'). But his origins were very humble: before changing his social status, his profession was quite different, since he practiced the much less high-profile job of δουλεύειν ('to be a slave'): in order to change his position, he had to buy a letter—and he had paid a lot of money for it!

The second one is very similar:

τοῦτο τὸ "οὔλεϋειν" εἶχες πάλαι, ἀλλὰ τὸ βῆτα  
οὐκ ἐπιγινώσκω· Δέλτα γὰρ ἐγράφετο.<sup>24</sup>

The part of the verb (-οὔλεϋειν) that indicates the actual job of the protagonist of the epigram (βουλεύειν, 'to be a senator') was already present in the profession he used to practice before (δουλεύειν, 'to be a slave').

This list of wordplays might be very long. A good way to cut it short is to quote one of the wittiest examples, taken from the rich epigrammatic production of Lucillius, where an old woman who dyes her hair not only does not become νέα ('young'), but is instead as old as the Titaness Rhea, daughter of Gaia (the earth) and Uranus (the sky), sister and wife of Cronus, mother of Zeus:

τὰς πολιὰς βάψασα Θεμιστονόη τρικώρωνος  
γίνεται ἐξαπίνης οὐ νέα, ἀλλὰ Ῥέα.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Anonymous, *Greek Anthology* 11.337: "You are a senator, Agathinos, but tell me how much you paid now for the Beta, for formerly it was Delta" (transl. Paton 1918).

<sup>24</sup> Anonymous, *Greek Anthology* 11.260: "This Ouleuein you had long ago, but I don't recognise the 'b' (*bouleuein*, to be a senator), for it used to be written 'd' (*douleuein*, to be a slave)" (transl. Paton 1918).

<sup>25</sup> Lucillius, *Greek Anthology* 11.69: "Themistonoe, three times a crow's age, when she dyes her grey hair becomes suddenly not young (*nea*) but Rhea" (transl. Paton 1918).

There is still another wordplay I would like to mention before closing this part of the essay. It is the charade, witnessed in this very book by an epigram of Dionysius, that the ancient editor of the anthology, Constantine Cephalas, has put right after the two poems of Ammianus on Polemon:

“Χοιρί” μέν, οὐκ “ἴδιον” δέ με θύετε· καί με καλεῖτε  
“χοιρίδιον”, φανερώς εἰδότες οὐκ ἴδιον.<sup>26</sup>

It is almost impossible to translate this epigram and save the charade present in the Greek text, which plays on the word χοιρίδιον (‘piggie’), a diminutive of χοῖρος (‘pig’), wrongly etymologized as ‘our own pig’, as if the word came from the union of χοῖρος and ἴδιον (‘own’).

## 2 Riddles and wordplays

### 2.1 Charades

Since the charade is often a wordplay that assumes the pattern of a riddle, it is no wonder that we find it in another book of the *Greek Anthology*, the fourteenth, dedicated to mathematical problems, oracles and riddles.

This is the most famous charade of the book:

οἶνου τὴν ἑτέρεην γράφε μητέρα, καὶ θεὸς ἐπ’ ἄρθρῳ  
ἄρθρον· τοῦ πατρὸς πατρὸς ἀκοιτὶς ὄρῃς.<sup>27</sup>

Its solution is the poet Homer. In Greek, his name (Ὅμηρος) can in fact be seen as the union of the masculine singular article (ὁ) and the noun μηρός (‘thigh’), the part of the body of Zeus where the king of the gods inserted the fetus of his son Dionysius (the god of wine) after the death of his mortal mother Semele. The union of the article (ἄρθρον) ὁ to the limb (equally ἄρθρον) μηρός gives birth to the name of the poet who was born in the town (Smyrna, today İzmir) whose name is connected with the woman (Smyrna, also known as Myrrha) who slept with her father Cinyras.

<sup>26</sup> Dionysius, *Greek Anthology* 11.182: “You are killing me, a pig but not your own, and you call me ‘piggie’ (or ‘our own pig’), knowing well that I am not your own” (transl. Paton 1918).

<sup>27</sup> Anonymous, *Greek Anthology* 14.31: “Write the second mother of wine and add an article to the article: you see him whose fatherland was her father’s wife” (transl. Paton 1918).

The riddle propounded by this epigram does not play on an etymological pun: the poet's name is not connected with a crucial event of his life, as it happens in the story we read in the *Chrestomathy* attributed to Proclus,<sup>28</sup> where he tells that, after his birth in Smyrna, Homer was first called Melesigenes, a name that was changed into Homer (Ὅμηρος, 'hostage') when the poet was given as a hostage (εἰς ὀμηρείαν) to the inhabitants of Chios.

The wordplay that, in a witty way, explains the name of the poet through the union of ὁ and μηρός is clearly a useful opportunity to teach different school subjects at the same time: grammar (the proper meaning of the word 'article', that is 'little limb'), literature (Homer and his life), mythology (the bizarre birth of Dionysus; the incestuous lover between Smyrna/Myrrha and her father), geography (the town of Smyrna), etc.

This, by the way, was one of the goals Constatine Cephalas was aiming at with his small collection of riddles, consisting of almost fifty epigrams, since in the foreword that precedes the fourteenth book he wrote the following words: "I also propound these riddles to those who love to work hard, so that they can make some exercise—and they can learn as well what kind of riddles the pupils of the past had to solve, and what the actual pupils".<sup>29</sup>

## 2.2 Plays on meter

Everybody knows how much Homer was studied by the ancient Greeks, and by the Byzantines as well; therefore, nobody should be surprised if Homer and his poems were a subject that might be exploited by later poets who wanted to compose riddles equally based on wordplay.

Here is an example that comes from a small collection of Byzantine riddles recently edited for the first time:

ὁμωνυμοῦντα δύο γράμματα μόνα  
φέρουσι δύο συλλαβαὶ τῶν γραμμάτων  
στοιχεῖα πέντε πανσόφως κεκτημένων.  
Καὶ τοῦ μὲν ἔστι μέτρον ἐκ πυρριχίου,  
τοῦ δ' ἐκ τροχαίου, καὶ νόει μοι συντόμως.  
Τὸ μὲν πνοὴ τίς ἐστι ἡνεμωμένη  
Ὅ δὲ τροχάϊος, σώματος μέρος φίλον.

<sup>28</sup> Proclus, *Chrestomathy*, B 14–18 Allen.

<sup>29</sup> The text of this introduction (γυμνασίας χάριν καὶ ταῦτα τοῖς φιλοπόνοις προτίθημι, ἵνα γνῶς τί μὲν παλαιῶν παῖδες, τί δὲ νέων) is discussed by Cameron 1993, 136–137. For the introductions to the other books of the *Anthology*, see Aubreton 1968.

Οὔπερ τὸ πρῶτον ἀφελὼν τῶν γραμμάτων,  
εὗρης Ὀμήρου στρατιώτη<ν> γενναῖον.<sup>30</sup>

Whoever wants to find the “brave soldier of Homer” hinted at in the last line must find the two names that hide themselves in the former clues: the “blowing wind” is, in Greek, the Notos (νότος), today Ostro or Austro (in Latin, *Auster*); the “part of the body” is the back (νῶτος); therefore, the soldier is Otus of Cyllene (Ὠτος), an Achean warrior who was the captain of the “great-souled Epeians”, killed by Polydamas in the fifteenth book of the *Iliad*.<sup>31</sup>

The didactic goal of this clever little poem goes beyond the limits of literature and touches another educational subject: meter. In the first two solutions there are two letters that have the same name (o and ω, small o and big o); the slight difference between the two solutions lies in their meter pattern, since the first one is a pyrrich (two short syllables) and the second one is a trochee (one long and one short syllable).

And meter—to be precise, the most famous meter structure of classical poetry—is the main subject of the last example of wordplays of this essay:

ἦν ὅτ' ἔην βροτῶ εἵκηλος ἄψευα ἡδὲ νόημα  
καὶ νόος ἐστύγεεν πᾶσαν ἀγνορίαν·  
αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' ἐδάην κενεῖν σοφίην καὶ τυφον,  
καὶ πάντ' ἤμειψα, χρώτα, νόον, μέλεα.  
Δάκτυλον ἐκπάγλως πόδα, καὶ πόδα δάκτυλον ἴσχω·  
ὄμματά μοι ποῦς καὶ δάκτυλος, ἀνθερεῶν ποῦς,  
καὶ ξύμπαντα μέλη ποῦς, αὐτὰρ ὁ ποῦς οὔ μοι ποῦς·  
καὶ κεφαλὴν φορέω δακτύλῳ ἀντίθετον.<sup>32</sup>

**30** This riddle in dodecasyllables is contained in the Marcianus Graecus 512, a manuscript copied in the fourteenth century (f. 264v): “This riddle built in a very learned way has as its solutions two bisyllabic words; each word has five letters, and two of these letters have the same name. The meter of the first word comes from the pyrrich, while the meter of the second one comes from the trochee. Think about it, quickly! The first word is a blowing wind; the trochee is a part of the body. If you take away the first letter from this second word, you will find a brave soldier of Homer” (my own translation). On the collection of twenty-two riddles preserved by this manuscript, see Beta, 2014. The same collection is preserved by the Vindobonensis Phil. gr. 124 (ff. 6rv) as well.

**31** Homer, *Iliad* 15.518–519.

**32** This anonymous riddle has been published by Cougny 1890 (it is the number 27) and by Milovanović 1986 (it is number 202): “Once upon a time I was similar to a human being, because of my body and my intelligence; my mind hated every kind of arrogance. But, after having learnt that wisdom is empty, and a useless illusion, I have changed everything: colour, mind, limbs. Surprisingly I have a finger foot and a foot finger; I have eyes that are a foot and a finger; my

The speaking character (the dactyl) brings us back to the topic of this paper—and of this conference as well: etymology.<sup>33</sup> Thanks to the ancient writers, in fact, we learn that the ‘foot’ that was the foundation of this meter (hexameter) was called ‘dactyl’ (that is, ‘finger’) because its peculiar form (a long part followed by two shorter ones) reminded one of the shape of a ‘finger’.<sup>34</sup>

### 3 Conclusions

We do not have too many data about the teaching of the Greek language in later times, apart from the more sophisticated subjects (the so-called προγυμνάσματα, the ‘fore-exercises’) meant for the advanced students that were so popular in the schools of rhetoric of Greece (but also of Rome). As far as Byzantium was concerned, we know that a major part in the school program for young pupils was played by the mysterious σχεδογραφία (‘schedography’), a quite complex system of educational exercises introduced around the 11th century.<sup>35</sup>

Among these complicated and demanding exercises there were riddles too, according to a concise statement we read in a passage Nicholas Mesarites wrote between the end of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th century, when he described the Church of the Holy Apostles.<sup>36</sup>

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chin is a foot; all my limbs are a foot, but the foot is not a foot; the head that I bring is the opposite of a finger” (my own translation). On this riddle, see Beta, forthcoming.

**33** In the text of the riddle there are some words that are, *metrically speaking*, πόδες (feet): ὄμματα (eyes) is a dactyl; ἀνθερέων (chin) is a choriamb; κεφαλή (head) is an anapaest (that is, the opposite of a dactyl).

**34** Aristides Quintilianus, *On music* 1.17. If we should trust the attributions we read in the few manuscripts that have transmitted it, the emperor Julian composed an epigram that enigmatically alludes to the same meter: “The wise Penelope, Icarius’ daughter, walking on six feet, appeared to have three fingers” (Cougny 1890, no. 23; Milovanović 1986, no. 43; Κούρη Ἰκαρίοιο περίφρων Πηνελόπεια, /ἔξ ποσὶν ἐμβεβαυῖα, τριδάκτυλος ἐξεφάνθη) (my own translation). The second line describes the meter features of the first line (that is a formular line: see for instance Homer, *Odyssey* 1.329, et al.), because among the six ‘feet’ of the hexameter we find, in the odd positions, three ‘fingers’ (that is, three dactyls). On this riddle, see Beta, forthcoming. For other epigrams on similar subjects, see *Greek Anthology* 14.15, on the structure of the iambic trimeter.

**35** For a very schematic treatment of this subject, see Alexander Kazhdan’s entry “schedography” in the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 1991, vol. 3, p. 1849 (with bibliography).

**36** On Nicholas Mesarites’ passage, see Downey 1957, 866 and 899. On the probable features of these riddles, see Wilson 1983, 23. On the use of riddles as a school subject (together with the Ἑρωταποκρίσεις, the so-called “Questions-and-answers”, a set of queries on biblical topics that was very popular in Byzantium), see also Milovanović 1986, 10–11.

The Byzantine writer, who became Metropolitan of Ephesus after the conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204, does not say what precisely these γρίφοι (a synonym of αἰνίγματα) looked like. But it is intriguing to think that the polished skill of playing with words, first developed by classical comic playwrights such as Aristophanes, Hellenistic poets such as Meleager, and Imperial poets such as Ammonius, eventually reached the schools and the students of the later Byzantine empire through the many, playful epigrams of the *Greek Anthology* collected by Constantine Cephalas at the beginning of the 10th century.

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